

Wild

AUSTRALIA'S WILDERNESS ADVENTURE MAGAZINE

Winter
(July–September) 1996, no 61

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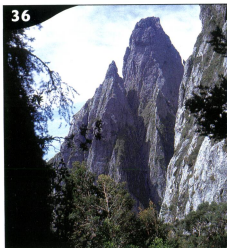
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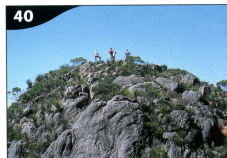
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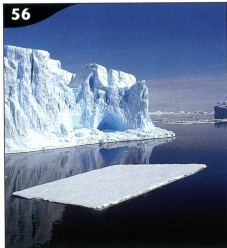
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Winter
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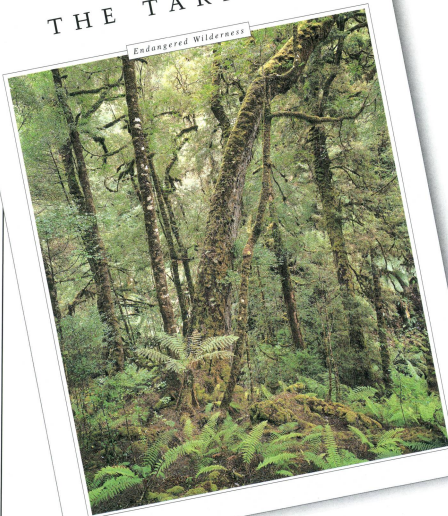
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Cover Kelly Miller above Crater Lake, Cradle Mountain—Lake St Clair National Park, Tasmania. *Steve Mitchell*

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Wilderness loses two friends

Peter Dombrovskis and Milo Dunphy



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Easter 1996 will long be remembered as a dark time for Australian wilderness lovers. As tens of thousands of *Wild* readers were heading for the bush on Easter Thursday it was learned that master wilderness photographer Peter Dombrovskis had been found dead on a solo photographic trip to his beloved Western Arthur Range in South-west Tasmania. Then, as if that wasn't enough, on returning from our Easter sojourns, we were shocked by the news that legendary New South Wales environmentalist and bushwalker Milo Dunphy had died of cancer in Sydney at the age of sixty-six.

The subject of Peter Jackson's award-winning profile in *Wild* number 53, Peter Dombrovskis brought Tasmanian wilderness into homes throughout Australia. His annual *Tasmanian Wilderness Calendar* and his books *Wild Rivers* and *The Quiet Land* set the standard in Australian wilderness photography—a standard which remains unsurpassed.

The Wilderness Society has said that his photos were decisive for gaining World Heritage protection for a number of outstanding natural features of western Tasmania, and particularly for saving the Franklin River.

I fondly remember visiting Peter at his home—nestled in magnificent forest high above Hobart on the slopes of Mt Wellington—when planning the article about him for issue 53. With his wonderful warmth, youthful enthusiasm and quiet modesty he made me feel instantly welcome and at ease.

A protégé of renowned Tasmanian wilderness photographer Olegas Truchanas (who himself died on a trip in Tasmania's wilderness; see his profile in *Wild* number 10), Peter in turn was mentor to a generation of younger wilderness photographers, and freely gave them his time and encouragement.

Not surprisingly, the Dunphy name is legendary in New South Wales bushwalking and conservation circles. The late Myles Dunphy was one of Australia's pioneer bushwalkers and conservationists and his son Milo (who was interviewed in *Wild* number 3) continued the tradition until his own death in April.

Milo Dunphy was honorary secretary of the National Parks Association of NSW at the time of his death, a member of the

Federal Government's landmark National Estate Inquiry in 1973 and a former vice-president of the Australian Conservation Foundation. His work centred on saving large areas of NSW for National Parks, particularly in the Blue Mountains. The NSW Premier Bob Carr was quoted as saying that Milo Dunphy's death is a sad loss to Australian conservation. He also announced the establishment of a wilderness fund named in honour of the Dunphy family.

The legacy of these two inspired people is inestimable. Not only do we owe them a debt of gratitude, but so will countless as yet unborn Australians who will enjoy and be inspired by wild places which, but for this selfless pair, would most likely have gone the sad way of so many beautiful parts of our country.

WILD THINGS

The innovations I announced in our 15th anniversary special issue, number 60, continue with this issue (another big 'un—128 pages; issues 60 and 61 have been the biggest successive issues we've ever published). The tables in our Gear and Equipment surveys have been redesigned to make them more attractive and readily comprehensible and we have enlarged the type used in departments and 'boxes'. The former is now the same size as that used in feature articles.

As we didn't think it fair that Australian readers should have all the fun, we recently began to distribute *Wild* (and *Rock*) in New Zealand and, now, in the USA.

Finally, after more than eight years at *Wild* Glenn van der Knijff has left us to travel overseas. A person of many talents and qualities, he is already missed. The good news, however, is that his successor, Stephen Curtain, is cast in the same mould.

Chris Baxter

Environmental impact statement

Wild is printed on Monza paper, which is made of 35 per cent pre-consumer waste and 15 per cent post-consumer waste that has been recycled and oxygen bleached. The cover has a water-based varnish (not an environmentally detrimental UV or plastic finish). We recycle the film used in the printing process. *Wild* staff run an environmentally aware office. Waste paper is recycled, printer ribbons are re-inked and waste is kept to an absolute minimum. We invite your comments and recommendations; please contact the Managing Editor.

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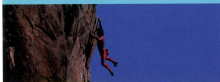
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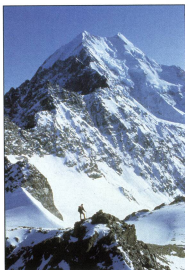
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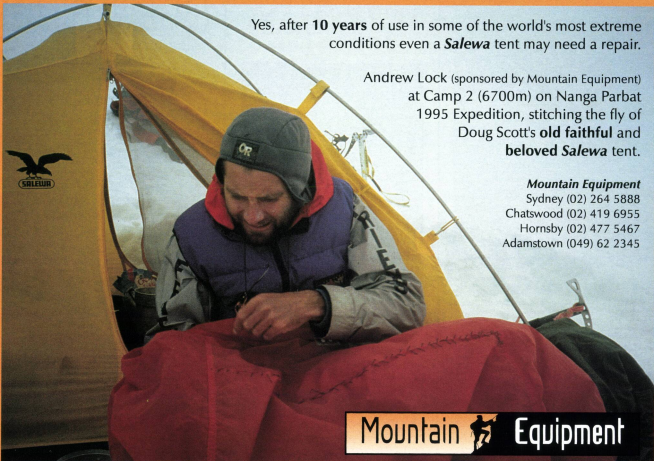
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Peter Dombrovskis and Milo Dunphy

Australian wilderness loses two of its best friends

Deaths of two environmental giants

Australia's wilderness community has lost two of its most cherished members in recent months with the deaths of renowned Tasmanian outdoors photographer Peter Dombrovskis and second-generation New South Wales environmentalist Milo Dunphy.

Dombrovskis (see Peter Jackson's profile in *Wild* no 53) was Australia's best-known wilderness photographer, whose career began under the tutelage of one of the founders of the Tasmanian environment movement, Olegas Truchanas. His extraordinary landscape calendars and diaries have become institutions among thousands of conservationists and outdoors enthusiasts. The wide-spread publication of Dombrovskis's most potent image—that of Rock Island Bend on the Franklin River, used to such effect during the 'No Dams' campaign of the early 1980s—has been recognised by environmentalists and politicians alike as a crucial turning-point in the country's most important conservation battle. His books, *The Quiet Land* (1977) and *Wild Rivers* (1983), are much-cherished classics in the libraries of many *Wild* readers.

Dombrovskis was alone in the wilderness when he died. After being accompanied on to the crest of his beloved Western Arthur Range in South-west Tasmania on 27 March by a friend and 'porter', he was left to photograph the area's rugged and remote glacial peaks and lakes as he had done on so many previous occasions. Dombrovskis's method of working entailed long periods of solitary contemplation and meticulous planning; he would often wait for hours—sometimes for days—for the lighting effect he wished to capture. After a week, and after Dombrovskis's scheduled date of return had passed, searchers set out in poor weather to look for the missing photographer. His body was found in a descent gully near Mt Hayes on the spine of the range he had visited so often. Although it appeared that he had fallen a short distance it is thought that he may have suffered a heart attack.

Dombrovskis's death at age 51 was keenly felt within the bushwalking and conservation communities. The only consolation is the extraordinary legacy he

leaves behind—not just his art, but those forests, rivers and mountains from Tasmania to Cape York which owe their preservation in part to his reverent and effective images.

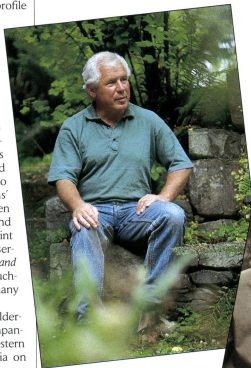
Within two weeks came news of the death from cancer of Milo Dunphy, one of the pioneers of the New South Wales

Dam west of Sydney, a threat which prompted the re-formation of the Colong Committee (now the Colong Foundation) to continue the task of protecting the Blue Mountains wilderness which was so close to the hearts of Milo and his father.

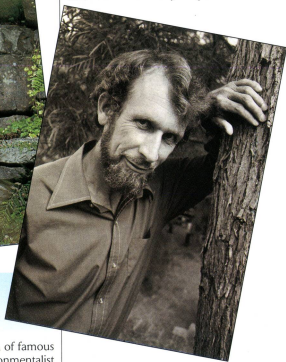
A keen bushwalker and overseas trekker, Milo Dunphy—who was almost 67—is fondly remembered as one of the most influential and well-liked members of Australia's bushwalking and conservation fraternities.

Up seven

A team of four young Australians hopes to take Tim Macartney-Snape's 'sea-to-sum-



Above, Peter Dombrovskis in his garden. Peter Jackson. Right, Milo Dunphy. Photo Dunphy collection



conservation movement and son of famous explorer, map maker and environmentalist Myles Dunphy. Dunphy junior carried on the work of his father (who died in 1984 at the age of 93) through his love of Australia's wild places and his fierce determination to fight for their preservation. A key participant in conservation campaigns across the country since his work on the Colong Committee in the late 1960s, Milo's most important posts were as long-time director of NSW's Total Environment Centre and as Vice-president of the Australian Conservation Foundation. One of his recent campaigns was that for the halting of extensions to the Warragamba

mit' concept a step further by circum-navigating the globe in a small yacht and climbing the highest mountain on each of the seven continents along the way. The expedition, to be led by Grant Seamer and inspired by the exploits of British mountaineer, adventurer and Himalayan pioneer HW 'Bill' Tilman, intends to depart next January.

Corrections and amplifications

From *Wild* no 60: The time quoted on page 11 for Peter Treseder's recent run from Kanangra Walls to Katoomba in the Blue

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Mountains was for the round trip, not one way. Australia's James Allen is not the youngest Westerner to have climbed Mt Everest thus far, as reported in Quentin Chester's article 'Dark Horses and Black Sheep' (page 54). This title goes to 17-year-old Frenchman Bertrand Roche who ascended the mountain in 1990. Other climbers on the mountain at the time of Allen's ascent have also cast doubt upon his claim to have seen 'many dead bodies' near the summit. The 'Gibson Bushwalking Club' listed in the Victorian section of the survey of bushwalking clubs on page 72 is actually the Gisborne Bushwalking Club Inc. Also, the presentation of references or participation in three day-walks are not strict entry requirements for membership of the VNPA's Bushwalking and Activities Group. Rob Blakers's book *The Tarhine—Endangered Wilderness* (reviewed on page 103) costs \$13.95, not \$19.95.

NEW SOUTH WALES

Blueys bicentennial

A party including Blue Mountains historian Greg Powell and president of the New South Wales Confederation of Bushwalking Clubs Andy Macquene set out last October

to walk a section of the route taken by a party of ex-convicts who almost crossed the Blue Mountains 18 years before the famous explorers Blaxland, Wentworth and Lawson (see Greg Powell's article on the expedition in *Wild* no 33). The walk was part of a number of activities in the Bowen Mountain—Whenny Gorge area held on the 200th anniversary of the original expedition and took in the spectacularly sculptured Everingham's Thunderstorm Cave just below Whenny Gap, in which the explorers sheltered during a violent storm one spring night during 1795.

VICTORIA

Falls Creek access

The Victorian National Parks Association reports that negotiations with the Alpine Resorts Commission have successfully restored 'free' access to the Alpine National Park for cross-country skiers wishing to pass through the ARC-controlled area around the Falls Creek resort. Skiers heading to or from the Alps have been angered in recent seasons by ARC demands—sometimes in the form of aggressive 'toll collectors' on skis (see *Wildfire*, *Wild* no 53)—that they pay trail fees for traversing the short section

of ARC 'compound' required to gain access to the park.

It is now proposed that the road between Windy Corner and the Nordic Bowl be available for use without charge by Alps-bound skiers, who are asked to follow the outside edge of the groomed trail along the Rocky Valley Dam wall, then on to Heathy Spur. The ARC says that as long as the trial route is not abused this will become a permanent arrangement.

Still running

The Victorian Rogaining Association will be celebrating its 20th anniversary on the weekend of 23–24 November by rerunning the first ever official rogaine, which was held by the VRA at Strath Creek north of Mt Disappointment in 1976. The commemorative event, which will use the same course and map as the inaugural



A rogaining team confers at a checkpoint. Peter Carrodus

competition, is likely to attract a large turnout of 'competitive navigation' enthusiasts and organisers are not to hear from anyone who took part in the historic 1976 event.

For more information, contact the secretary of the VRA on (03) 9890 4352.

Outdoors on show

One of Australia's better-known outdoors photographers will be exhibiting his sometimes startling images of the Australian bush at Gallery 101, Ground Floor, 101 Collins St, Melbourne, from 1–14 July. Bill Bachman's exhibition, titled 'Animal, Vegetable, Mineral', will feature many photographs from his travels in the Australian wilderness including those from his most recent book, *Local Colour* (see Reviews, *Wild* no 55).

TASMANIA

Fifty years under the earth

'Organised' caving in Australia reaches its half-century this year with the 50th anniversary of the nation's oldest caving club, the Tasmanian Caverneering Club. Members of the TCC—which is one of the oldest continuously active caving clubs in

Wild Diary

Information about rucksack-sports events for publication in this department should be sent to the Editor, Wild, PO Box 415, Prahran, Vic 3181.

June			September (continued)		
23	Trip leadership workshop (for teachers, instructors and leaders) C	Vic (03) 9459 4277	Whitehorse Bush Triathlon M	Vic (03) 9560 0524	
29–30	24-hour Championships R	SA (08) 268 8732	7–8 Sea proficiency training/assessment C	NSW (042) 68 1001	
30	Proficiency testing C	Vic (03) 9459 4277	8 Stirling Silver S	Vic (068) 24 2961	
July			14 Brown Brothers Mt Hotham to Falls Creek S	Vic (03) 9889 5043	
14	Metrogaine R	Vic (03) 9890 4352	Life, Be In It Marathon Championships C	Vic (03) 9499 7956	
20	Basic skills instructor assessment C	Vic (03) 9459 4277	White-water instructor intake C	Vic (03) 9459 4277	
27–28	Winter Classic M	Vic (03) 9898 7503	15 Jurkiewicz Adventure Sports Kosciusko Tour S	NSW 015 29 7652	
August			22 Spring 6-hour R	Vic (03) 9890 4352	
3	Basic skills instructor intake C	Vic (03) 9459 4277	28 12-hour (Lake Macquarie) R	NSW (02) 874 0226	
6– and 12-hour R	Qld (07) 3369 1641		28– The Institute for Earth Education Bio-Regional Conference	NSW (08) 396 3304	
Snowgaine 5-hour R	Vic (03) 9890 4352		October		
Snowy Hydro Cabramurra Tour S	NSW (064) 53 8521		5–7 Advanced sea proficiency assessment C	NSW (064) 94 1366	
3–4 24-hour (south coast) R	NSW (02) 874 0226		7–13 Canoe Polo World Championships C	SA (03) 9314 3887	
4 Klingsport Classic S	Vic (058) 24 2961		8–11 Snow & Outdoor Trade Show (trade only)	ACT (03) 9842 1206	
10 Hotham to Dinner Plain S	Vic (03) 9391 8054		12 Proficiency training/rolling clinic C	NSW (044) 65 1089	
17 Paddy Pallin Classic S	NSW (02) 264 2685		13 Proficiency assessment C	NSW (044) 65 1089	
18 Razorback Rush S (Mt Stirling)	Vic (058) 24 2961		Advanced white-water skills workshop C	Vic (03) 9459 4277	
25 Examiners' workshop (for ACF instructors only) C	Vic (03) 9459 4277		19 White-water instructor assessment C	Vic (03) 9459 4277	
Rocky Valley Rush S	Vic (060) 24 3170		26 12-hour R	SA (08) 268 8732	
Kangaroo Hoppet, Australian Birkenbeiner, Joey Hoppet S	Vic (057) 54 3103		Spring 12-hour R	Vic (03) 9890 4352	
31– World Championships (24-hour) R	WA (09) 275 4734		12-hour R	WA (09) 275 4734	
September			26–27 24-hour Championships (Inverwood) R	NSW (02) 874 0226	
7 Charles Derrick Memorial S	Vic (060) 24 5974				

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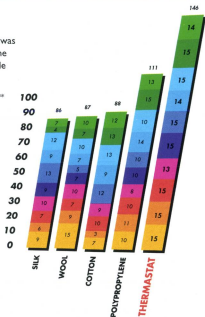


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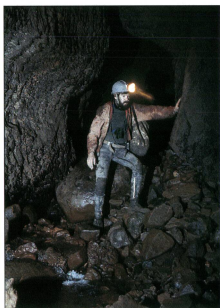


the world—have been responsible for the exploration and documentation of many of Australia's most notable caves including Exit Cave—for many years Australia's longest, known cave—and Growing Swallet, Khazaddum, Ice Tube, Annakananda, and Niggly Caves, each in turn Australia's deepest-known caves.

TCC members also participated recently in the exploration of some of the deepest caves in the world while taking part in overseas expeditions. In the more distant past, club member Frank Salt took part in the 1964 British expedition which first reached the bottom of France's Gouffre Berger (-1122 metres), then the deepest-known cave in the world.

To celebrate this milestone, a 50th anniversary get-together will take place at Tyenna Lodge, Maydena, on the weekend of 16–17 November. Activities are likely to include caving (of course), talks, slide shows, the TCC annual dinner and a commemorative club team photo. All enquiries regarding the celebrations should be directed to the TCC, PO Box 416, Sandy Bay, Tas 7005.

Stephen Buntin



Tasmanian caving pioneer Trevor Wailes in Owl Pot, Tasmania. **Below**, Adam and the pancakes. *Marlene Chesney*

released as *Wild* went to press. Anyone who has walked in the area or has an interest in the management of this jewel in Australia's wilderness crown is urged to get hold of a copy of the draft plan and make comments and suggestions as the final plan takes shape. For more information, write to the Australian Nature Conservation Agency,

PO Box 71, Jabiru, NT 0886; phone (089) 79 9101; fax (089) 79 9198.

OVERSEAS

● Nettlebed rescue

Six Australian cavers were rescued in January, uninjured and in good spirits, from New Zealand's 30 kilometre long Nettlebed cave system. The cavers were attempting the 870 metre deep through trip—one of the world's deepest—a task that required the party to pull their ropes down behind them, canyoning style, through the nine pitches of Blizzard Pot and then negotiate the labyrinth of passages in Nettlebed itself. This approach provides no prospect of retreat should a mistake in navigation be made and relies on a successful completion of the whole route.

Despite thorough research of the route and assurances from the locals that the way was straightforward, the Australians took a wrong turn near The Ducks—a section close to the bottom of the cave which is prone to flooding. Their mistake led them to believe that the cave had sumped with the recent rains, making completion of the through trip impossible. The party retreated to Salvation Hall, which is stocked with emergency sleeping-bags, and waited for 30 hours until rescuers arrived. When found, the cavers still had reserves of food and light and they eventually broke the surface again after 56 hours underground.

SB

● First Australian 1000er

The Australian Lost River Expedition to the caving regions of Mexico has succeeded in achieving its objective of pushing an 'Australian-explored' cave to a depth of 1000 metres for the first time. This is the culmination of more than 25 years of Australian expeditions to the area including more than half a dozen in the last decade or so.

The depth record came when Greg Tunnock dived the sump at -946 metres in the Sonconga cave. This sump proved to be just 14 metres long and gave access to the final section of cave—explored by Tunnock and Australia's 'Messner of caving' Alan Warild—which led them to an impassable sump at a depth of 1014 metres.

The expedition also found a new, higher, entrance to the main cave in the Zongolica area, Nia Quien Nita ('Dead Dog'). The new cave (dubbed 'Top Dog') was explored to a depth of 600 metres before joining Dead Dog. The new entrance and a small extension to the bottom of the cave have added 130 metres to this important system, giving it a new depth of 906 metres. ●

SB

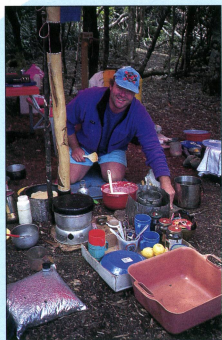
Readers' contributions to this department, including colour slides, are welcome. Typed items of less than 200 words are more likely to be printed. Send them to the Editor, *Wild*, PO Box 415, Prahran, Vic 3181.

NORTHERN TERRITORY

● Kakadu plan

A new draft management plan for the Kakadu World Heritage Area with implications for bushwalkers and other recreational users of the park was due to be

peripatetic pancakes



What was this? What was the catch? What would anyone be doing giving away pancakes on the South Coast Track? After much anticipation we arrived at the rumoured location of the pancake dispensers—and it was true! Two walkers from Hobart—Steve and Adam—had set up an outdoor kitchen in the camping area. As we ambled up to them Steve asked, 'Would you like jam, or lemon and sugar? Tea? Or perhaps coffee?'

For six days while we had walked we had lived on freeze-dried food and suddenly here was Adam presenting us with perfectly formed little crêpes! They tasted wonderful and I ate slowly to savour them.

Adam and Steve had set up their little pancake stall out of the goodness of their hearts—there was no catch. They had walked in the area before and this year decided to do something a bit different for their Christmas–New Year break. They told us that on their busiest day they had served 36 pancakes to passing walkers and they planned to stay for two weeks or until their supplies ran out. Each person who sampled their cooking was asked to write his or her name in a comments book. What accolades were written therein!

Thanks again to Steve and Adam from the many bushwalkers who will never forget this special New Year's experience.

Marlene Chesney

a gastronomic surprise awaited the many walkers, my party included, on Tasmania's South Coast Track last Christmas holidays. For several days each group of walkers we passed asked us, 'Did you hear about the free pancakes further up the track?'

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EXTREME DOME

WEIGHT: 4.0 Kgs/8lb 9.5oz **CAPACITY:** 3-4 Person **POLES:** 5 Easton 7075 aluminium **INNER:** Breathable 70 denier ripstop **OUTER:** Polyester ripstop ultra 40D, 3000mm PU waterproof coating, seam sealed. **FLOOR:** Nylon, 5000+ PU waterproof coating, seam sealed. **DIMENSIONS:** Height = 1300mm/51.2in Width = 2600mm/102.4in Length = 2100mm/82.7in



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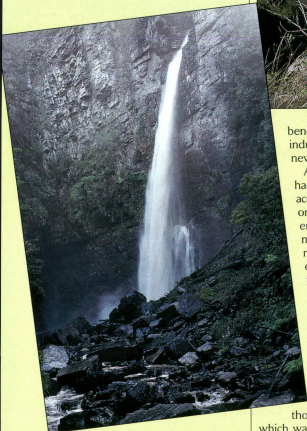
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New government wields axe

Environmental sacred cows on the chopping block

● A step back?

The election of a Federal Coalition Government has sent tremors through the bedrock of the Australian environmental movement, with a number of sacred cows set to be slaughtered and others nervously eyeing the chopping block. Within days of the election the new government reiterated its intention of scrapping the old Labor Government's 'three mines policy' which for more than ten years has restricted the number of uranium mines allowed to operate in Australia. A number of senior ministers soon flocked to the site of a proposed new uranium mine at Jabiluka—well within the boundaries of the Kakadu World Heritage Area—some espousing the



benefits of a stronger uranium export industry potentially fuelled by the new mine.

As *Wild* went to press no decision had been made on the mine which, according to the government, would only go ahead if the 'most stringent environmental guidelines' were met. The environmental movement roundly condemned any expansion of the uranium industry and vowed that the protests over any new mine would be comparable to those at the height of the anti-nuclear anger of the late 1970s and early 1980s.

An early victim of the new government's budget cutting was the federal division of the Environmental Protection Authority, the role and funding of which was to be significantly reduced. The EPA has been the primary 'official' environmental watchdog at a federal level for more than a decade and its 'gutting' raises fears that the monitoring of the environmental practices of industry and government is to be shuffled off to the States.

Two months after the federal election the fate of the Coalition's billion-dollar environment package—announced during the election campaign—was still undecided. Not only were doubts raised about the Howard Government's willingness to stick to the size of its commitment given the post-election budget slashing, but there seemed to be little hope of it succeeding in getting the Democrats-Greens-controlled Senate to permit the partial sale of Telstra, on which funding for the package depends.

● One in, one out

Tasmania's Bob Brown, one of the country's best-known and most tireless environmental campaigners, was elected to the Senate in the March federal election, the first electoral victory by the recently formed Australian Greens. But one of the Senate's two green politicians—Christabel Chamarette of the unaffiliated Western Australian Greens—lost her seat to a Democrat candidate; thus the overall result for the political wing of Australia's environment movement was a return to the status quo.

Brown will join the other WA Greens senator, Dee Margetts, when the new Senate is sworn in on 1 July. His election

Tasmania's Vale River near Cradle Mountain; threatened by logging and sewage outfall from a proposed tourist lodge. *Geoff Lav. Top*, more threatened wilderness, this time in Kakadu National Park, Northern Territory; flood plain near Koongarra mineral lease. *Andrew Cox*

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came after some acrimonious campaigning including a festering war of words between Brown and the Democrats leader Cheryl Kernot.

Further division within the conservation movement arose during the election campaign over whether or not to support the Coalition's linking of its environmental package to the partial sale of Telstra.

● River wild

The Wild Rivers Committee of the Australian Heritage Commission released a draft discussion paper in February regarding the conservation and management of Australia's wild rivers. The report investigates in some detail such issues as the effects on rivers of grazing, farming, land-clearing, mining and the building of roads as well as the impact and implications for management of recreational uses ranging from fossicking to kayaking. Although the closing date for submissions commenting on the discussion paper was 31 May, anyone interested in the development of a draft code for the management of our increasingly rare wild rivers should see Action Box item 1.

QUEENSLAND

● Mine!

The Queensland Premier Rob Borbidge in April threatened legislation to ensure that the proposed Century Zinc mine in the Gulf Country would go ahead despite environmental and Aboriginal objections. A series of failed talks with Aboriginal leaders ended with an angry confrontation between one local activist and the Premier at a meeting which had been intended to resolve the issue. The company involved in the project insists that it does not wish to go ahead with the mine unless it has community support.

Borbidge also cast doubt on the landmark land-use agreement struck last year by Queensland Aborigines, local landholders and environmentalists over the protection of Cape York. In a move designed to circumvent protracted native title and environmental disputes, groups including the Cape York Land Council, Wilderness Society and Australian Conservation Foundation agreed to work in concert on issues regarding the management of millions of hectares of Cape York wilderness. The State premier, however, has refused to commit

his government to the principles contained in the agreement, has led those lobbying for federal government legislation to extinguish native title on pastoral leases, and has refused to rule out mining and other developments on the Cape York Peninsula.

● Eco-science, eco-law

The 1996 National Environmental Law Association conference was held on 8–12 May on the Sunshine Coast, featuring the former executive director of Greenpeace International, Paul Gilding, as keynote speaker. The conference, intended to focus on the role in environmental management of lawyers, planners and scientists, tackled such thorny issues as 'sustainable development', 'mining and the environment' and 'environmental impact assessment'.

NEW SOUTH WALES

● Wilderness areas are 'go'

Many long-awaited and controversial wilderness declarations were made by the State Government in April although only 8 of the 16 areas promised for declaration by March 1996 were included—a total of 350 000 hectares. These areas were (north to south): Warrazambil in the Border Ranges National Park; Macleay Gorges; Werrikimbe; Barrington; Kanangra-Boyd; additions to the Ettrema; Budawang; and additions to the Goobagandra and Bimberi (both part of one proposal). All the declarations included significant concessions to recreational vehicle users, particularly the Werrikimbe, Barrington and Budawang proposals. The government also failed to re-route horse-riders from several places—the Bicentennial National Trail still runs through the middle of the proposed Macleay Gorges wilderness and close to the edge of two others.

An important step forward in the Blue Mountains—where the 125 000 hectare Kanangra-Boyd wilderness was declared—is the protection of more than half of the Boyd Plateau and the declaration and transfer of the Sydney Water lands up to the Warragamba Reservoir's full storage level to the Blue Mountains National Park. This effectively rules out any further increases in the capacity of the reservoir.

The eight areas remaining to be declared include Wollemi—the largest wilderness left in south-east Australia—and additions to the Deua wilderness, both with significant forestry areas. Conservationists are waiting. See Action Box item 2.

● Pipeline off course

A gas pipeline from Longford in Victoria to Wilton south of Sydney has been proposed by BHP and Westcoast Energy to supply the Port Kembla steelworks with cheap power. Environ-

jill redwood

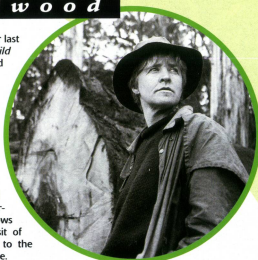
As announced in the Editorial of our last issue, the inaugural winner of the *Wild* Environmentalist of the Year Award is Jill Redwood.

Jill lives on an idyllic property in Goongerah, in Victoria's East Gippsland, and for ten years has been a tireless campaigner for the threatened forests of that region. Jill has been a driving force behind the Concerned Residents of East Gippsland and edits their journal *The Potoroo Review*, a fine newsletter full of forest news. Almost everyone interested in East Gippsland's forests knows Jill. When *Wild* sponsored the visit of David Bellamy and other experts to the region, Jill's farm was used as a base.

In the 1980s Jill had a major influence in successfully preventing the Very Fast Train from passing through the East Gippsland forest (a proposal which is about to raise its ugly head again), and she has opposed (and exposed) the logging of the magnificent wild forests of the region for many years.

Living alone in an isolated place, with few resources, and taking the strong stand she has against powerful interests, Jill has been subjected to significant intimidation. In particular, she has had one log truck blare its horn along the length of her property at 4 o'clock every morning; she has had her letter-box and front sign repeatedly vandalised; she has had severed goats' heads left in her letter-box (Jill breeds goats); she has had a horse shot; and she has been subjected to threats to have her house torched. Her response shows a courage which can be an inspiration to us all.

David Bellamy describes East Gippsland's forests as 'the most diverse temperate forest ecosystem anywhere on earth'. East Gippsland is the largest forested area left in Victoria. It



Jill Redwood with felled old-growth giant, Errinundra Plateau, East Gippsland, Victoria.
Julian Meehan

supports over 300 rare and threatened species. The forests have existed since Australia broke away from Gondwanaland some 50 million years ago, surviving ice ages and climatic changes, but the greatest impact on the region has been in the last 30 years. Despite their critical importance for conservation, about 13 areas the size of football fields are clear-felled each day, of which some 80–90 per cent is wood-chipped.

All of us at *Wild* thank you, Jill, for your commitment to something wonderful and, we hope, enduring: the forests of East Gippsland.

To experience the job Jill does for our threatened forests firsthand, see Action Box item 8.

Brian Walters

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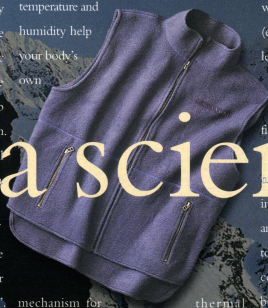
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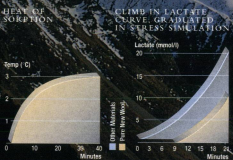
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mental groups in both States have been campaigning to prevent the construction of such a pipeline. In NSW a less environmentally damaging route was rejected by the developers in favour of one which bisects rainforests, creeks, wetlands, land between the Ettrema and Budawang wilderness areas in Morton National Park and the Illawarra Escarpment. Environmental concerns cover a range of problems including inadequate plant and animal surveys along the route, poor drainage, site suitability, excavation and construction impact and the vagueness of the proposed route in some places.

A commission of inquiry was held into the proposal in April and recommendations are expected in June.

● Underwater National Parks

Very few marine areas in NSW are protected in any way at present and the area that is fully protected within each zone is minuscule—often no larger than 100 by

This activity stopped, however, after the arrest of a number of hunters in a remote part of the park near the Goobagandra River. A police helicopter was used to spot and then apprehend the perpetrators, with ground-based management vehicles rushing to the scene. The size of the operation seemed to make a solid impression on those who had previously flaunted the

Action Box

Readers can take action on the following matters covered in Green Pages in this issue.

1 Contact the Director, Wilderness and Wild Rivers Unit, Australian Heritage Commission, GPO Box 1567, Canberra, ACT; phone (06) 217 2111; fax (06) 217 2000; email wrivers@ahc.erin.gov.au.

2 Write to Pam Allen, Minister for the Environment, Level 9, St James Centre, 111 Elizabeth St, Sydney, NSW 2001 seeking immediate declaration of the eight remaining wilderness areas in the government's 16-area promise and call for the removal of horse-riding and recreational-vehicle use from all wilderness areas.

3 Write to the Premier, Bob Carr, Parliament House, Macquarie St, Sydney, NSW 2000 and ask for the rapid introduction of legislation that uses simple zoning of marine parks and prohibits the taking of all marine organisms within marine National Parks.

4 Contact the Mt Stirling Development Task Force, PO Box 415, Mansfield, Vic 3722; fax (057) 79 1227.

5 Contact the STOC on 019 149 472 or (052) 37 7245.

6 Contact the Wilderness Society, 130 Davey St, Hobart, Tas 7000; phone (002) 34 9366; fax (002) 23 5112.

7 To protest about the sale of the bushland, write to the Minister for Recreation, Sport and Racing, Graham Ingerson, GPO Box 2555, Adelaide, SA 5001; or write to the Minister for Environment and Natural Resources, David Wotton, GPO Box 1047, Adelaide, SA 5001. David Wotton also has a telephone hot line for the public to express concerns about the environment: 0055 89 109.

8 Jill conducts regular tours of the East Gippsland forest, particularly on the first weekend of each month. She can be contacted to arrange bookings on (051) 54 0145.

Jervis Bay, NSW, a candidate for beefed-up marine-protection legislation.

200 metres. Marine plants and animals and their habitat need levels of protection similar to those given by land-based National Parks.

Some scuba divers—the bushwalkers of the underwater world—have joined with conservation groups to lobby for the introduction of comprehensive marine-park legislation that will allow for significant areas of ocean to be fully protected. The potential benefits of these areas to local tourism and in maintaining fishing stocks are huge.

The NSW Government is to take the first step on this path quite soon. See Action Box item 3.

● Babe? Hardly...

The February–March issue of the *Colong Bulletin* reports the success of a National Parks & Wildlife Service operation to halt the illegal hunting of pigs in Kosciusko National Park near Tumut. People had been observed using dogs (illegal in National Parks) to 'run down' and hold pigs until the dogs' owner could catch up and cut the pigs' throats. Although pigs are indeed a pest in National Parks and are subject to intensive eradication programmes, the illegal hunting caused more problems than it solved; it served mainly to disrupt official control programmes and damage park tracks. There had also been reports of other park users being intimidated by the hunters.

park regulations and the Colong Foundation suggests that similar tactics could be used to restrain the illegal use of management tracks by four-wheel-drive vehicles and horse-riders.

VICTORIA

● Up to their old tricks?

New draft regulations concerning Victoria's alpine resorts that have recently been released by the 'new-look' Alpine Resorts Commission are guaranteed to raise the ire not only of the commission's traditional critics—ski tourers—but of bushwalkers as well. Included in the draft regulations and associated regulatory impact statement is a new fee of \$6.50 a day for each car which enters ARC-controlled areas, *even in summer*. Under this new regime, bushwalkers wishing to park their cars beside the road while walking along the Razorback to Mt Feathertop, or out to Mt Loch, will be charged \$6.50 a day for the privilege. The fee is justified as 'abolishing the existing subsidisation by snow season visitors of the cost of providing services all year round'.

No particulars are given of what services are provided to bushwalkers and exactly how bushwalkers are subsidised by winter resort users and no exemptions to the fee are considered—not even for those merely passing through an ARC 'compound' on the way to somewhere else! The documents also assure us that the new maximum resort entry fee during winter of \$16 a car is 'very competitive and clearly at the low end of the scale'.



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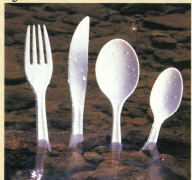
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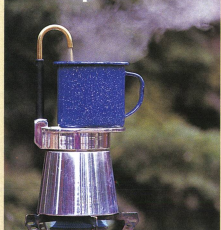


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Curiously, the new regulations also include a section which applies penalties to resort users who drive in a resort in winter without carrying wheel chains. The impact statement that accompanies the regulations states: 'While this is a new regulatory provision, for many years visitors have been requested by the ARC to carry wheel chains into alpine resorts.' [Wild's italics.] It would appear that the signs erected in alpine resorts each winter threatening large fines for people failing to carry chains have previously been 'bluff' without any legal basis.

A further worrying document is the ARC's Environmental Policy Statement. Although some attitudes expressed about environmental protection are well ahead of previous ones, the statement contains few solid commitments and lacks any quantifiable targets, time lines or criteria to assess the ARC's performance in meeting those commitments that are included. There is no indication that the document is to be gazetted under the *Alpine Resorts Act* (1983), thus removing any compulsion of the commission to act on its 'policy'.

Although a draft of the document was provided to a few selected interest groups it was never released for public comment; some interested alpine users who wrote and asked for a copy were refused.

Sections of the policy of most concern include a lack of commitment to developing or implementing comprehensive management plans for each resort and the delegation of the task of preparing ski-field development plans to the commercial lift operators themselves. Despite State Government acceptance of a Land Conservation Council report recommending that the granting of ski-mobile licences be restricted to operational and search-and-rescue uses, no such restriction is included in the ARC policy. This seems to leave the door open for granting commercial permits for ski-mobile tours within ARC-controlled areas, feared to be a step towards such tours in National Parks.

The existing restrictions on camping in ARC-controlled areas remain, without clarification of their ambiguous wording. The policy allows camping only with permission and only in specially designated camping areas. But because no management plans have been prepared for ARC resort areas—the preparation of such plans was assumed in the original Act—no camping areas have ever been designated. Catch 22.

The policy also urges the 'rationalisation' of ski resort boundaries and uses almost identical wording to that employed for seeking control of National Park land adjacent to its resorts in 1991 when it produced a paper and maps identifying areas of National Park which it wanted added to its jurisdiction. The ARC's 1993 environmental study of the Swindlers Creek—Golden Point area in the Mt Hotham resort included maps that show 'pods' of 'possible [downhill] ski slopes' protruding outside the resort boundaries

into the Alpine National Park and Bundara—Cobungra Remote and Natural Area. This is suspected to be one of the boundaries targeted for 'rationalisation'.

● Have your say

The environmental effects statement documents relating to the future development of Mt Stirling went on display during April and May and the State Government appointed a panel to hear public comment and submissions during June and July. Aspects of the EES have been criticised by the Mt Stirling Development Task Force which is coordinating opposition to proposals to construct a new ski resort on the mountain. The MSDTF urges anyone with an interest in protecting the mountain from full-scale development as a downhill ski resort to contact the government panel and request the chance to make a submission. The panel will report its findings in August. See Action Box item 4.

● Old-growth chipboard

The State Government has invited overseas companies to invest in the removal of up to 800 000 cubic metres of 'residual roundwood' (that is, waste trees) from East Gippsland's forests for the manufacture of particle board and similar products. The glossy advertising literature waxes lyrical over the benefits of logging in Victoria, including the acceptability of 100 per cent foreign ownership of operators, low skilled-labour costs, government assistance with (read: 'subsidisation of') set-up costs and claims that the environmental debate in Victoria has been 'solved'!

The volume of 'waste wood' put up for sale (and which can now be inspected in the State's East Gippsland showroom in the form of old-growth forests) is three times that taken from Victorian forests as wood-chips at present.

● Otway wilt

Members of the Save the Otways Coalition staged a series of protests and blockades in the Otway Ranges in March claiming that unsustainable logging practices are threatening water catchments and encroaching on the few remaining stands of old-growth rainforest. The Otways have for a number of years been a 'forgotten corner' of the Victorian logging industry, something the STOC hopes to change by raising the public's awareness of the clear-felling of swathes of the region's forests, which have some characteristics more in common with Tasmanian rainforests than those elsewhere on the mainland.

The STOC is also demanding the release of a Department of Natural Resources & Environment report into the spread of 'myrtle wilt', a disease which is affecting sections of the area's myrtle beech rainforests. David Butt from the STOC said: 'We know that the report supports our fears that the spread of the myrtle wilt disease is linked directly to unsustainable logging practices in the Otway Ranges, yet the DNRE refuses to release it. This document

is public information; we are demanding that it be made available.' See Action Box item 5.

● Daisy, daisy...

A CSIRO report has cast doubts on the survival of many Australian native plants after studying the once common button wrinklewort in the grasslands of south-eastern Australia. This grassland daisy is now restricted to just a few patches due to the destruction of native grasslands; there are so few specimens left that scientists fear it is becoming genetically unfit because of inbreeding.

The CSIRO's Andrew Young reported: 'We suspect that there are many other plants in the same situation as the button wrinklewort, posing a real threat to the conservation of our native grasslands.'

● New department

After its re-election in late March the Kennett Government has moved to amalgamate several departments including the DCNR. The new superdepartment, which now has responsibility for everything from flora and fauna to fisheries, land valuations, minerals and surveying, is headed by two ministers, the Deputy Premier Pat McNamara (who will probably oversee the 'resource-based' areas like water, fisheries and minerals) and former Minister for Health Marie Tehan (probably looking after National Parks, wildlife, forests and the like). The department will be known as the Department of Natural Resources & Environment (DNRE). (We await the repainting of all department vehicles and the production of new, glossy stationery and pamphlets featuring the new name.)

TASMANIA

● Well hung

Following the Tasmanian election in February no party has a clear majority in the 35-member House of Assembly. The Liberals won 16 seats, Labor 14, the Greens 4, with a single Independent. In theory, one would think that this gives the Greens the ability to decide who will govern the State by agreeing to support one major party or the other. But after the acrimony of the short-lived Greens-Labor Coalition Government of a few years ago the ALP resolved to support the incumbent Liberal Government by allowing it to govern in minority, rather than reconcile themselves to taking office with Green support.

Promises were flying thick and fast during the election campaign. Both sides pledged to establish 'new' National Parks in areas ranging from the Mole Creek caves to Bruny Island and the Tasman Peninsula (see Green Pages, *Wild* no 60). Of these, one of the few proposals which bore close scrutiny was the Liberals' promise to declare a Bruny National Park, which would consist of existing reserves plus some areas at present unprotected. These

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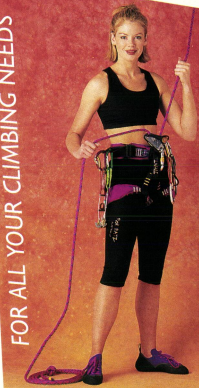


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Even more valuable was the Liberals' promise to protect some 117 500 hectares of forest around the State. This would include the wild country adjoining the Cradle Mountain-Lake St Clair National

wilderness forests of Tasmania's South-west accompanied by Geoff Law and Alec Marr from the Wilderness Society.

Hill saw at first hand the damaging impact of logging on the tall-eucalypt forests and wilderness areas of the South-west. The journey took him to the Snowy Range, past Mt Anne, Federation Peak and Vanishing Falls and into the clear-felling in the Picton and Huon valleys.



Inspecting the damage in South-west Tasmania: the Wilderness Society's Alec Marr (second from left) and Federal Environment Minister Robert Hill (second from right). Law

Park, just west of Barn Bluff; forests adjacent to the Mt Victoria and Mt Maurice reserves in the State's north-east; and some of the forests in the great tract of wilderness south of Macquarie Harbour. The Wilderness Society has been told that these promises will be ready for parliamentary approval some time during winter this year.

Another election promise, this one from Labor, is also worth consideration. This was the pledge to make the 18 000 hectare Wellington Range near Hobart into a National Park. The range has a number of dramatic features apart from the imposing Mt Wellington and includes a number of walking tracks. Protection of this magnificent asset would be a tremendous leap forward for conservation. In theory, the Greens have the ability to side with either major party to pass legislation of this type through the Lower House; it would then remain to be seen what the notoriously conservative Upper House would do with the legislation.

To join the fight to save Tasmania's wilderness areas, see Action Box item 6.

Geoff Law

It was a similar trip in April 1986 that is supposed to have turned Labor's infamous 'number cruncher' Graham Richardson into a 'born-again greenie'. The Wilderness Society hopes that the impact of the beauty of the South-west on Hill will be similar.

Robert Hill will share the responsibility for resolving the ongoing debate about the country's forested wilderness areas with new Primary Industries Minister John Anderson.

GL

SOUTH AUSTRALIA

● Bush sell-off

The Federation of South Australian Walking Clubs reports that the State Government is proposing to sell 50 hectares of native bushland at Mylor in the Adelaide Hills—one of the most scenic parts of the well-known Heysen Trail walking track. A meeting attended by bushwalkers, conservationists, naturalists, politicians and local residents heard the Minister for Environment & Natural Resources David Wotton describe the native bushland on the banks of the Onkaparinga River as 'surplus to the requirements' of the two government departments previously responsible for its administration. See Action Box item 7. ●

● New minister visits South-west

In April the new Federal Environment Minister Robert Hill visited the threatened

Readers' contributions to this department, including colour slides, are welcome. Typed items of less than 200 words are more likely to be printed. Send them to the Editor, *Wilder*, PO Box 415, Pahrans, VIC 3181.

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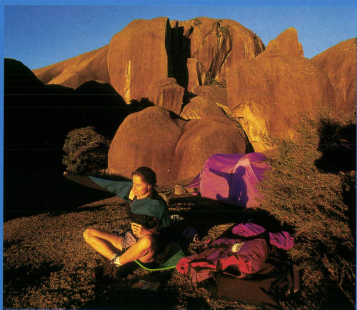
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Girraween National Park. Photo: Damiano Visocnik

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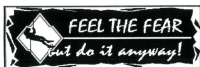
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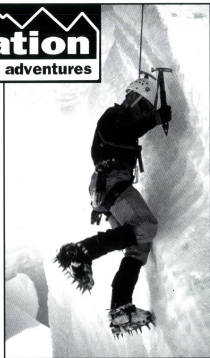
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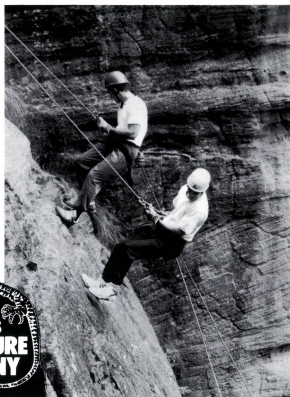
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Dome on the range

Reflections on the life 'under canvas', by **Quentin Chester**



dusk was closing in fast as we descended into the valley after a day's skiing around the Fainters on the Bogong High Plains in Victoria. All morning the light had been dazzling. It was as though the slopes were rimmed with mirrors. But by mid-afternoon the horizon began to hoard thick clouds. Two of our group had skied on ahead to prepare dinner. As we followed them up the fire track the wind changed direction and mist began to charge in. With the sun long gone the slopes turned a dark, glacial blue. Then, nestled among a shadowy congregation of snow gums, we saw a dome, glowing from within.

Is there any sight more welcome on a wild night than a warm tent? For the next few hours the four of us sat in one of the tents, cooking up soups and fortidues in the entrance vestibule. The wind howled. Inside the air was thick with conversation and the smell of wet leather. We played cards, our sunburnt faces gleaming in the candlelight. Sleet splattered on to the tent.

So we drank some port and gnawed on dark chocolate. We celebrated being there, in our glowing dome.

To my mind the true emblem of the outdoors is not the walking boot or the rucksack but the humble tent. Today Vibram soles and bags on backs are so much a part of metropolitan life that they no longer mark someone as being of the bush. Tents are different. They evoke another dimension, suggesting a willingness to engage and inhabit the wild rather than merely dress for the part. In short, they embody the spirit of the nomad.

Of course, there is always the option of bunking down under the stars. You can enjoy the immediacy of your surroundings. One is privy to the sights and sounds of the night. If sleep comes slowly you have the opportunity to gawk at the glimmering heavens. On the other hand, when dark clouds threaten or the air fizzes with insect life there's a lot to be said for having a canopy of mesh and nylon.

Dome on the range; in this case the North Razorback, Victoria. Mt Feathertop behind. Glenn van der Knijff

I will admit to occasions when my tent has supplied a welcome feeling of sanctuary. Nature is a wonderful thing yet if the night is pitch-black and you arrive at a strange campsite, it's often reassuring to have a roof over your head and a zippered door to close tightly. There have been times when my mind has been added by the extremes, times when certain locations have given rise to childish, irrational anxieties. In dank forests decked with vines, for instance, I have imagined myself at the mercy of crawling insects or carnivorous rodents lurking in the shadows. Beset by such fears I've been pathetically grateful for the chance to cower inside my abode.

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yet at the same time enveloped by a Ripstop hideaway with a feathery cocoon drawn tight around one's ears to muffle the mayhem is a delicious kind of thrill. No doubt it gives but a token sense of security. The average lightweight tent is, after all, a somewhat flimsy structure. Blundering gales can shred fly-sheets and skinny alloy wands do buckle under big dollops of snow. Nevertheless, just as we used to hide under the blankets as kids, so the chance to take refuge within a tent satisfies a primal need. It serves as a womb with a view.

I spent my first nights 'under canvas' as a four-year-old in a toy Indian tepee pitched on the back lawn. By that time I had also inherited a cowboy suit complete with black leather chaps, fringed leather waistcoat and a weighty chrome six-shooter. By day I rode my broomstick stallion and casually dispatched any number of imaginary outlaws. However, my nocturnal adventures in the tepee were far more memorable. Inside that tall cone of canvas I experienced for the first time a world beyond the confines of the family home.

Our yard backed on to a gully of scrub and slender eucalypts. On breezy, moonlit nights the shadows of swaying branches were projected on to the tepee's white walls. Outside were murmurs, rustlings and the banter of birds nesting nearby. I would lie there for hours just watching and listening before eventually sliding into a dream-filled sleep. Come morning the magpies would warble and I would wake slowly, often with my silver Eveready torch still clasped firmly in my right hand.

There are times when tents are simply shelters, convenient quarters into which you can collapse after a hard day. Yet they can also be meditative spaces where, on the borders of consciousness, thoughts and sensations assume a life of their own. There is something special about waking to the patter of fine rain on a fly-sheet. Or watching the ghostly drift of snowflakes from a narrow opening. On bitter winter mornings you can lie there—inwardly rejoicing as the honey-coloured light filters in. Slowly the tent warms and steam fills the air as though you were part of some mighty, magic pudding.

As well as providing such quiet interludes, tents have the power to magnify events and to sharpen one's reactions. I remember a night at Mt Cook when blasts of wind thundered down the Hooker valley like express trains. Our frail little Kmart tent shuddered under the strain. Each approaching gust was signalled by a howling in the trees. My companion and I were so spooked that on hearing this sound we leaped into positions at either end of the ridiculously flimsy tent, each bracing a quivering pole against our chest in a ludicrous gesture of defiance.

A few years later, during a climbing and skiing holiday in the USA, we were camped near Vail, Colorado, after a long day on the road. In the dead of night the same roar that had haunted us at Mt Cook jolted us

awake—only this time it really was an express train. I had unwittingly pitched the tent only a few metres from the tracks. The ground quaked and we sat bolt upright as the tent blazed with white light. In a moment of panic I thought that there had been a derailment. But then the locomotive rumbled past and we slumped back to the horizontal, both of us clutching our heads in our hands.

For our American sojourn we lashed out on a dome tent—a North Face VE24 to be precise. At first I was sceptical about this adaptation of Bucky Fuller's geodesic principles. For a start, the VE was a cumbersome package. Even when folded the poles were too long to fit into my rucksack. Worst of all, it was a diabolical tent to pitch. To arrange the poles into the right geometric configuration was a challenge that would have reduced Euclid to tears. And to get the tent upright on a dark, windy night was like trying to haul in a spinnaker with one hand.

Despite such misgivings I grew fond of the VE during our weeks of traversing the USA. The tent became a haven from some of the rank absurdities of American life. After a day in Las Vegas, for example, it was consoling to drive out of town, submit to the ritual of pitching the VE and simply lie there on the ground as though our bodies needed to make contact with the earth to disperse the bizarre impressions we had absorbed.

Even away from cities there were enough peculiar sights to make us grateful for a tent door to close and a good book to open. Camped in Utah's Zion National Park we thought we had the site to ourselves. But then at dusk an enormous 'trailer-home' pulled in alongside. It was mid-winter and the temperature that night slumped to -17°C. Dressed in duvets and huddled around our little stove we watched in disbelief as our new neighbours padded around inside their silver capsule. It was lit up like a Christmas tree with heaters humming and appliances whirring. They sat there, clad only in shorts and Hawaiian shirts, slurping from martini glasses and watching Johnny Carson on the television.

Retreating to the sanctity of our dome and the warmth of our bags was like returning to a space module after visiting an alien planet. We lay there reading by candlelight and contemplating a few of the incongruities of the modern world. With hindsight, I suspect the fact that we survived five months of constant travelling coast to coast was due in no small part to the restful confines of our dome away from home. Compared to the sandwich-board interior of the Kmart special there was something luxurious and calming about opening one's eyes to the VE's vaulted ceiling.

Of all outdoors paraphernalia, tents have undergone the greatest transformation in recent times. After generations of pointy pyramids and A-frames we have entered an era of morphological change with a bewildering array of tunnels, domes and

hybrids. From a distance some camp-sites seem to have been colonised by gigantic limpets and segmented slugs. Look closer at all the sweeping curves and elegant arcs and you begin to wonder whether Jan Utzon was really a gifted tent designer who was sidetracked into working on opera houses.

The great benefit of all this ingenuity is space. Tents often need to be much more than places in which to rest your head. In extreme weather they may be your only refuge, the place where you need to sleep, cook and keep your sanity intact. The extra room in the new breed of tents makes it possible to live an approximation of a normal life without constantly elbowing your co-inhabitants. There's space to spread out, to stretch and to stow gear. Relationships can be saved—and new ones initiated—without risking spinal injury.

I have friends who are sentimentally attached to old walking boots. Others are inseparable from their battered rucksacks. But my loyalty is to a little blue-and-green tent that has served as my bush home for the past decade. Admittedly most of the proofing has worn off the floor fabric and the back pole is bandaged with gaffer tape. Yet this wedge of mesh and nylon has been the chrysalis for so many experiences that to cast it aside would be like losing a limb.

My tunnel's great virtue is its size. It folds down small and is around half the weight of a big dome—thanks mainly to a mesh inner tent. On fine nights the fly-sheet can be furled to create a gazebo-style shelter, a boon in the tropics. At other times this tent has shielded me from monsoonal downpours, gales of 100 kilometres an hour, sandstorms and light dustings of snow. I have become attuned to its responses and to the music it makes in wind and rain. I know how to lash it down in wild storms and pitch it in the most unlikely nooks.

So, for ten years, I have shared some unforgettable episodes in the wild with this tent. It has sheltered me during solitary travels in the desert and perched on rocky sentinels in Bass Strait. At various times it's served as a honeymoon suite, portable office and personal crisis centre.

Just lately I have also seen my trusty tunnel in a new, yet familiar, light. Peering at it pitched on the back lawn through the kitchen window, I have tried to imagine what the experience must be like for my two daughters as they spend their first nights 'under canvas'. I watch the moonlight and see the shadows of my own childhood. And I can't help wondering whether some of the best times of their lives will be in tents too. ■

Quentin Chester

Quentin Chester (see Contributors in *Wild* no 3) writes regularly about going bush. He is the co-author of *The Outdoors Companion*, *The Kimberley—Horizons of Stone* and, most recently, *Australia's Wild Islands*, which explores the diversity of 28 Australian islands from the tropics to the sub-Antarctic.



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just don't know what to wear!

Dressing for the bush, by *Monica Chapman*



Whether you're going out on a Saturday night or getting ready to head out into the bush, you want to 'dress for the part'. When I started bushwalking (not *that* long ago, really!) the fashionable walker could be seen in an old flannel or cotton shirt and a pair of shorts. In cold weather he or she would front up in a woollen shirt and army trousers. Oiled jarpas were also popular but because I didn't like those greasy, black things I went for the new-look 'dry' japara. Those were the days!

During the past 15 years there have been many changes in bushwalking attire. The well-dressed walker of the 1990s can be seen in colour-coordinated, synthetic clothing and a Gore-Tex jacket; although available 'back then', today's 'new'

materials and manufacturing processes were very expensive.

So what does the novice bushwalker of today really need? The basics haven't changed. The weather conditions and the nature of the area you're visiting determine your choice of bush attire. The wide range of gear available these days and the price of that gear also play a part when creating your bushwalking wardrobe. Comfortable boots, adherence to the 'layering principle' (see box on pages 34-35) and good-quality wet-weather gear should be sufficient to tackle most climates and terrains. In addition, a spare change of clothes should always be carried so that if you *do* get wet you'll have something dry to put on once you are in the tent.

Well rugged up for a chilly lunch-stop on Mt Feathertop, Victoria. *Stephen Curtain. Right*, not everyone is equally conscious of the need to avoid chills. (Blue Lake, Snowy Mountains, New South Wales.) *Matthew Cain*

FOOTWEAR

Comfortable boots are a must. As your feet do most of the work when you are bushwalking they should be looked after properly. Loose-fitting boots don't give sufficient support and tight boots cause blisters. Tightly laced boots can cause bruising on the front of your feet.

New boots should be 'broken in'. Wear them around the house until you are sure

that they will be comfortable. If after a few hours you decide that they don't fit as well as they seemed to in the shop you can still exchange them. Once you've decided that these are the boots for you, wear them while doing your shopping or take them for a walk in the evenings. It is wise to wear your new boots on a dry walk before venturing out overnight. I've found that one way to adjust your new boots quickly is to walk straight into the first creek you encounter, then wear them until they are dry! If all this fails to break them in properly—and it has failed for me on occasion—be prepared to treat the resulting blisters.

New boots are reasonably waterproof but to keep them that way they need some care. Products such as Biwell and Sno-seal can be used to reseal leather boots from time to time. Make sure that the boots you buy have a sewn-in tongue so that the water can't get in at the base of the lacing.

Clean and dry your boots after each walk. Do not, however, dry them in direct heat—in front of a heater or in strong sunlight—as this will crack the proofing and the leather. Instead, dry them in a shady spot with a breeze (or in the garage). Some people stuff newspaper into their boots to absorb water but this needs to be changed regularly and sometimes leaves newsprint on the inside!

DAY WEAR

Underwear

Underwear is primarily a personal choice. While cotton absorbs perspiration better than synthetic materials, it can leave you wet and cold throughout the day. Thermal singlets and long johns provide warmth by transferring moisture away from your skin while still trapping a layer of air in clothes worn over them. Long johns are very comfortable when worn under overpants if you are walking in extreme weather conditions. A relatively recent innovation are thermal undies which keep those vital bits warm and dry. Synthetic clothing can be washed and dried quickly, which is very important as it also takes on body odours rapidly.

The long and the short of it

Whether you wear long or short sleeves and legs is a personal decision; however, each has distinct advantages and disadvantages.

A shirt is not worn primarily for warmth so—whether it is long- or short-sleeved—the material from which it is made is not that important. The main consideration is whether it protects you from sun, scrub and insects. Long-sleeved shirts give good protection while short sleeves have 'nothing up their sleeves' to assist. Although some people find them a little restrictive or

too warm, long-sleeved shirts are highly recommended.

Long pants also provide protection from sun, scrub and insects although unless loose in the legs they will be too warm and quite difficult to roll up for those shallow creek crossings.

Shorts are cooler and more comfortable when scrambling up steep slopes. They also provide more freedom of movement when worn under overpants in wet conditions.

In wet weather (provided it is not too cold) your legs are easier to dry at the end of the day than long pants. If you prefer walking in long pants make sure that they are not made from a heavy cotton such as denim—when wet, jeans are very cold and take forever to dry out.

Socks

There are two schools of thought on how many socks to wear. Some walkers swear by wearing a thin and a thick pair, claiming that this prevents their feet from rubbing against the boot and thereby reduces the risk of blisters. Others believe that one thick pair is sufficient. Whatever the number, make sure that your socks have a high wool content. Although very

warm, thick, pure-wool socks can be scratchy and take a long time to dry. Wool-blend socks dry more quickly while still providing the absorbency of pure wool. There are some 'thermal' socks on the market but these are generally not absorbent and don't provide the cushioning of wool and wool blends.

When buying boots, remember to take the socks you intend to wear with you for the fitting. Over time your boots may shrink or stretch but by adjusting the number or thickness of your socks you and your boots can walk many more kilometres together.

There are socks made from water-proof/breathable fabrics such as Gore-Tex but they are quite a bit more expensive than ordinary socks and often create more problems with fit and comfort than they solve although some people swear by them.

Wool or fleece?

Woollen shirts and jumpers keep you warm but are much heavier (particularly when wet) than their synthetic counterparts. Nor are jumpers ideal because a front-opening garment is more easily adjusted for temperature variations. Fleece jackets are much lighter, dry faster and



CLIMATIC CONSIDERATIONS

Keeping your cool when the heat is on

- Wear loose-fitting shirts and shorts (or long pants) which allow air to flow across your skin and evaporate the moisture.
- Use sunscreen sparingly as it hinders evaporative cooling.
- Put on a wide-brimmed hat.
- Have regular drinks and rest stops.
- Try not to walk during the hottest part of the day.

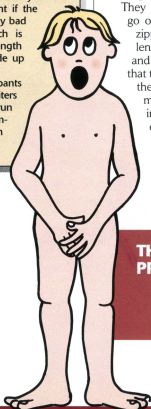
When the heat is off

- Wear a warm top.
- Carry waterproof clothing.
- Put on a warm hat to keep your head warm and dry.
- Don gloves or mittens.
- Use waterproof overmitts.
- Leave as little exposed skin as possible.
- Eat high-energy foods frequently.
- Keep moving.

High and dry

Staying dry is important when you're out in the bush and the weather is poor. However, it isn't always possible to stay *completely* dry. Do your best and remember:

- the success of the trip and the group's morale are directly influenced by whether your group is wet or dry
- dry walkers are happy walkers
- wet walkers get cold, feel miserable and want to go home
- allow for additional 'weather days' in your schedule so that you can stay in your tent if the weather is particularly bad
- wear a jacket which is about mid-thigh length so that it doesn't ride up too high
- don't tuck your overpants into your socks or gaiters as cold water will run straight into the warmer water already in your boots.



come in a variety of weights. They should be looked after in much the same way as woollen clothing but be careful if you wear them around a camp-fire as they can melt when sparks land on them.

EVENING WEAR

Around camp at night—when the temperature has dropped—you should insulate your body from the cold by donning your warm hat and jacket. If it's windy you may need to wear your waterproofs as well. If you're still cold, your best option is to head for the tent and a warm sleeping-bag!

Some people carry a pair of lightweight sneakers to wear around camp while others strap sport sandals over their socks for a real fashion statement.

SPECIALISED GEAR

The outer layer

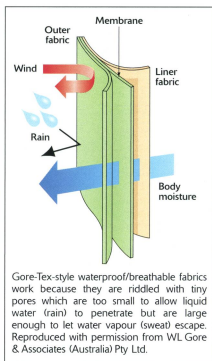
An important consideration when buying your first items of waterproof clothing—particularly for use in the southern regions of the country—is the type of walking (and/or skiing) you are likely to do. For prolonged forays into alpine areas, good-quality gear is essential.

Jacket: A jacket should be water- and wind-proof. It needs a large hood (under which you can wear a warm hat) with a draw-cord to close you off from the elements. The jacket should be loose fitting, have a double-fastening front opening and be long enough to protect your backside when sitting down.

Overpants: While not worn very often, these are essential when faced with driving rain, hail and strong winds.

They should be wide enough to go over boots and those with zippers—either half- or full length—are easier to get on and off quickly. I have found that the cheaper nylon ones are the most serviceable—I'm more likely to wear these in scrub than their very expensive Gore-Tex counterparts, which I reserve for skiing only.

Gaiters: When walking through scrub, knee-length gaiters help to prevent snake bites and scratches to your legs—and stop grass seeds from getting into your socks. There are many varieties of gaiters, some



with a front opening, others opening at the back. Some are made of sturdy canvas, others of Cordura or Gore-Tex and they are fastened with zippers, press-studs, Velcro or a combination of these.

I've found the zipper-only varieties difficult to undo when clogged with Tasmanian mud. I've also known press-studs to tear out. A combination closing system seems to work best. Gaiters which close at the back are not as likely to pull open in the scrub but can be more difficult to do up.

Hat and gloves: A warm hat is essential just about everywhere—as is a sun-hat! Modern bushwalking hats come in many colours, styles and mater-



THE LAYERING PRINCIPLE

Wearing several thin layers of clothing rather than one or two bulky garments allows you to adjust to temperature fluctuations easily by removing layers as you warm up or adding layers as you cool down. Layered clothing also traps air to help to insulate you from the cold. Heavy



ials. A woollen beanie or a fleece hat are both very practical. Balaclavas (a head-and neck covering) are available in silk, synthetic, wool or wool blends; if you really feel the cold or like the idea of wandering around looking like a bank robber, these are for you. I haven't seen many walkers wearing Balaclavas recently but not so long ago they were very popular.

When it comes to keeping your digits warm you can have gloves or mittens. Camp-fire theory has it that mittens are warmer because your fingers are together, not individually wrapped. I

find thermal gloves very practical for cool weather and they also dry very quickly. A pair of fleece mittens and waterproof overmitts complete my hand-warming set and provide a flexible arrangement suitable for all conditions likely to be encountered.

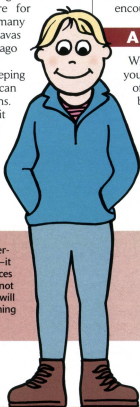
A FINAL WORD

When at last you think that you've solved the problem of 'what to wear in the bush' you may be confronted by very experienced walkers wearing all manner of things! Don't despair—

The right headwear is crucial! *Curtain*

now that you've learnt the basics one day soon you, too, could be dressed to impress somewhere on a mountain top! 🏔️

Monica Chapman has been bush-walking for more than 15 years and has ventured out in every Australian State as well as in Nepal. She is the immediate past president of the Federation of Victorian Walking Clubs and is heavily involved in its search-and-rescue section. Monica has edited and co-authored a number of well-known bush-walking guidebooks with her husband, John. She lives in Melbourne.



sweating resulting from over-dressing should be avoided—it dampens your clothing and reduces its insulation value. Similarly, not wearing sufficient clothing will increase your chances of becoming chilled, particularly at rest stops.

13th TIME LUCKY

Kevin Doran realises an Australian bushwalker's dream—a night out on the summit of Tasmania's Federation Peak



O Solitude, if I must with thee dwell,
Let it not be among the jumbled heap
Of murky buildings; climb with me the steep,
Nature's observatory—whence the dell
Its flowery slopes, its river's crystal swell,
May seem a span; let me thy vigils keep
'Mongst boughs pavillion'd, where the deer's
swift leap
Startles the wild bee from the foxglove bell.
But though I'll gladly trace these scenes with thee,
Yet the sweet converse of an innocent mind,
Whose words are images of thoughts refined,
Is my soul's pleasure; and it sure must be
Almost the highest bliss of human-kind,
When to thy haunts two kindred spirits flee.

John Keats (1795–1821)

It is a Monday evening in the middle of November. I am relishing the warmth that lingers in the rocks of the summit ridge of that holy of holies at the hub of Tasmania's South-west wilderness. There is

The Four Peaks viewed from Thwaites Plateau. *Stephen Curtain. Right, Federation Peak's mighty North-west Face seen from the Forest Chute. Kevin Doran*

a chill now in the evening breeze as a race develops between me—to the pinnacle of Federation Peak, and the sun—to the horizon out in the sea beyond Port Davey. Between us, the racing ridges of this magical area smudge into the somnolence engendered by the mellow evening light. I reach the top and the sun's disc expands briefly as it plunges into the western ocean. A special night begins...

Special for me because this is my 13th ascent to the pinnacle of Federation Peak, achieved tonight after so many runs at the big fellow spread over more than 18 years. Special because another trip down memory lane in April—over the Picton Range with 'Fedder' as the goal—failed due to the density of the scrub on the South Pictons

wild bushwalking



and poor weather. Special because Federation Peak is always special and special... too, because this time I have come alone...

Mea culpa! Somewhere in the literature it is said that to climb alone is to sin against the spirit of the sport. Still, Reinhold Messner did it successfully to some order and author Frank Smythe, whose mountaineering books literally nurtured me, was well into it. A lot of us climb alone for pragmatic reasons—such as serious photography—and, given an independent and self-sufficient determination not to come to grief, it often makes us err on the cautious side. Geoffrey Winthrop Young, writing in the Lonsdale Library's *Mountaineering*, a justly famous volume originally published in 1945, said that 'in mountaineering there is only one principle...that we should secure on any given day the highest form of mountain adventure consistent with our sense of proportion'. Smythe, in his excellent and classic book *The Mountain Vision* (1941), states that solitary climbing 'teaches self-reliance, makes a man observant and if it is to be safely carried out, imposes prudence and self-control. Best of all, it brings the climber into intimate contact with the beauties of the mountains.'

I crouch now in the limited shelter of the summit cairn to screen myself from what has become a decidedly cold and freshening north-easterly. A north-easterly, mind

you—that most blessed of winds to the Tasmanian bushwalker. 'How lucky can you be?' I think to myself as I watch the total demise of Monday's sun.

This pilgrimage began only 58 hours earlier when my wife drove me to the intersection of Farmhouse Creek with the Picton Road. It was a brilliantly sunny morning and we ate a cut lunch together before I started in. The approach to Farmhouse Creek resembles pictures of the Flanders fields during the First World War, which is appropriate since—albeit in vastly different ways—both have been battlefields (the latter over clear-fell logging in the 1980s and 1990s).

The track led me through delightful forests along the banks of Farmhouse Creek, then over the creek itself to plunge through the less pleasing bogs that surround its junction with the Mt Bobs track. Rising above these I found the new track leading from the Picton—Craicraft Saddle down into the South Craicraft valley, cut to minimise traffic close to Wargata Mina (Judds Cavern). The new track was a bit difficult to follow high up on the

afforested ridges but was excellent lower down and pleasantly dry.

I bivouacked by the South Craicraft River in idyllic conditions. No need to put up a tent—not even a problem with insects. Next day I ventured on along the South Craicraft valley, then followed the new track over a ridge system to the West Craicraft valley. This track totally avoids the often exasperating area around the junction of the two Craicraft Rivers and has pleasing views of the Pictons, Mt Hopetoun and 'Fedder' itself dominating the West Craicraft valley. At lunch-time on this second day I paddled in the West Craicraft to cool off and achieved an early stop for camping at Cutting Camp at the foot of Moss Ridge, where again the weather was so good that there was no call to pitch a tent.

As I climbed Moss Ridge on the third day I thought a lot about the unusual weather typified by a north-easterly. Furthermore, my little barometer/altimeter told me that atmospheric conditions were remarkably stable. Always an opportunist when in the mountains, I began to think that here was a chance to realise a long-time ambition—to bivvy on top of Federation Peak—and that if conditions remained favourable when I got to the top of Moss Ridge, it should be attempted quickly before the weather changed.

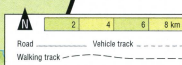
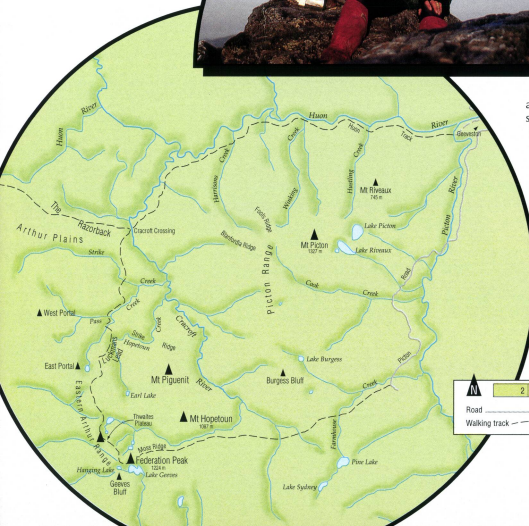
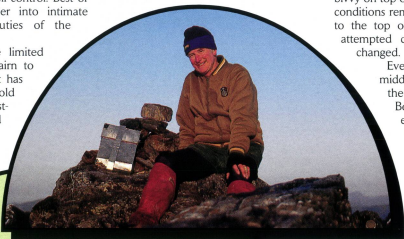
Everything was propitious. In the middle of the afternoon I pitched the tent on the upper part of the Béchervaise Plateau and cooked an early supper. I then set off up to and round the Southern Traverse and finally climbed carefully up the tower of the old enemy. (As always, I use the term respectfully and with affection.) The light was beginning to fade. Would the weather hold? Would the holds hold? It was after

all my 13th time and all that. My mind seemed to float outside my body—or was I just having a dream about this benign weather, down there in my little green tent on the Béchervaise Plateau? No!

This was the real thing. Jealous? You should be!

The sun has now gone and I have rugged up after hastily taking a few photographs. I consult the summit logbook, tucked away in its double-skinned metal container along with pens and pencils. No one has signed in since 24 April and this surprises me.

I search around for a suitable place to spend the night and find a



cranny in rocks some 12 metres below the pinnacle on the Béchervaise Plateau side. I roll out my trusty old sleeping-bag encased in a Gore-Tex bivvy-bag on a sleeping-mat and after stowing my boots in a safe spot (dry feet, would you believe, after three days in the South-west!) I wriggle in, pull the draw-cords and warm up.

I reflect how, travelling alone, one closes one's mind to the actual sacrifice of treating 'Fedder' with such cheek. Fortunately there are always so many decisions to make and

feet. Those two hours of the mountain day, around dawn and sunset, are those for which we photographers endure it all! And there is that incomparable feeling that follows dawn as one's body is warmed up after the bivvy by the sun's rays while you thrill in the recognition of all those old friends, the neighbouring peaks, etched majestically by horizontal light. Nowhere in the world can you see anything that is better than Precipitous Bluff with the sandy splash of Prion Beach or the stately tower of

good weather. Overnight there is a rain shower but I am using the tent for the first time. Next day it's down the Rock Slide, round past the Northern Lakes and up the venerable Forest Chute to Thwaites Plateau. As I climb the Forest Chute I note the unbelievable persistence of the north-east airstream and the idea arises that I could repeat my recent ascent of Federation while the going is so good. I quickly pitch my tent in the tall scoparia of the Climbers Camp on Thwaites Plateau

and leave some dehydrated food to soak since this time I have no intention to make a summit bivouac—or I should say that I decided against it after some soul-searching! Up to the top again to complete a 14th ascent—it might after all have been risking bad luck to stick on thirteen! This time, however, the weather clags in and the views of my previous visit are now hidden, which I take to mean that 'Fedder' thinks I have been a bit greedy!

Next day I visit the Hanging Lake and climb Geeves Bluff and visit a few other nostalgic spots such as the site of the high camp for the epic winter trip of 1978. I then embark on the three days' dash out along the Eastern Arthur Range and down Luckmans Lead. The weather gets hotter but is patently more unstable. An unexpected shock awaits me at Cracroft Crossing—that inimitable river has taken out the suspension bridge put in by the Army. As I begin my battle with the Huon (Yo-Yo) Track, the weather finally breaks and the heavens open—but too late to spoil my adventure.

On my ninth day I bump into two people day walking only an hour and a half away from my rendezvous with my wife and the 'recovery vehicle'. I have been nine days in the South-west, going in one way and coming out another, which is always satisfying, have scaled Federation Peak twice—and have virtually seen nobody. Such a privileged experience is no longer available in many parts of the world and I do hope that we can preserve this precious area and that our citadel of the South-west wilderness may long retain its wild isolation and pristine beauty.

In *The Mountain Vision* Frank Smythe wrote:

These are privileged and exceptional occasions... Go out alone on the hills and listen. You will hear much. The winds will hold for you something more than sound; the voice of the stream will not be merely the babbling of hurrying water. The trees and flowers are not so separate from you as they are at other times, but very near; the same substances, the same rhythm, the same song binds you to them. Alone amidst Nature, a man learns to be one with all and all with One. ●

Kevin Doran is a medical practitioner in Hobart. He came to Australia from the UK in 1971 and has walked and climbed extensively throughout the world.



Above, Geeves Bluff and mysterious Hanging Lake seen from Federation Peak. **Left,** 13th time lucky; the author's Federation Peak summit self-portrait. *Doran*

points of technique to concentrate upon along the way.

I gradually detach myself from the heady excitement of sleeping alone on the summit of Federation Peak and focus instead on the millions of stars becoming visible above me—and, of course, the occasional shooting star and satellite.

The next thing of which I am aware is first light. Thin mist is already dispersing around me. It's cold but there's no wind. Quick, check the barometer. It's steady. I am keen to get my cameras ready for the dawn so I get out of the sleeping-bag and put all my clothes on—fibrepile jacket, Gore-Tex parka; the lot. I needn't have worried quite so much, however, as the absence of wind makes it much milder than last night. A few mouthfuls of scroggin fortify the inner man—having brought up both a Leica with interchangeable lenses and a twin-lens Rolleiflex, I have not loaded myself down with a wide variety of tucker.

So many dawns in the mountains are memorable. The mists roll away, the red glow finally explodes, the gold spreads lavishly and the exquisiteness of the morning light—both sharp and soft—enhances everything that is laid at one's

Mt Anne. I can also pick out Mt Wellington and gloat to think how many people in Hobart would be envious of me at this moment. Yet a lot of solitary climbers would recognise the twinge of regret one feels at such times because there is no one with whom to share this surfeit of beauty.

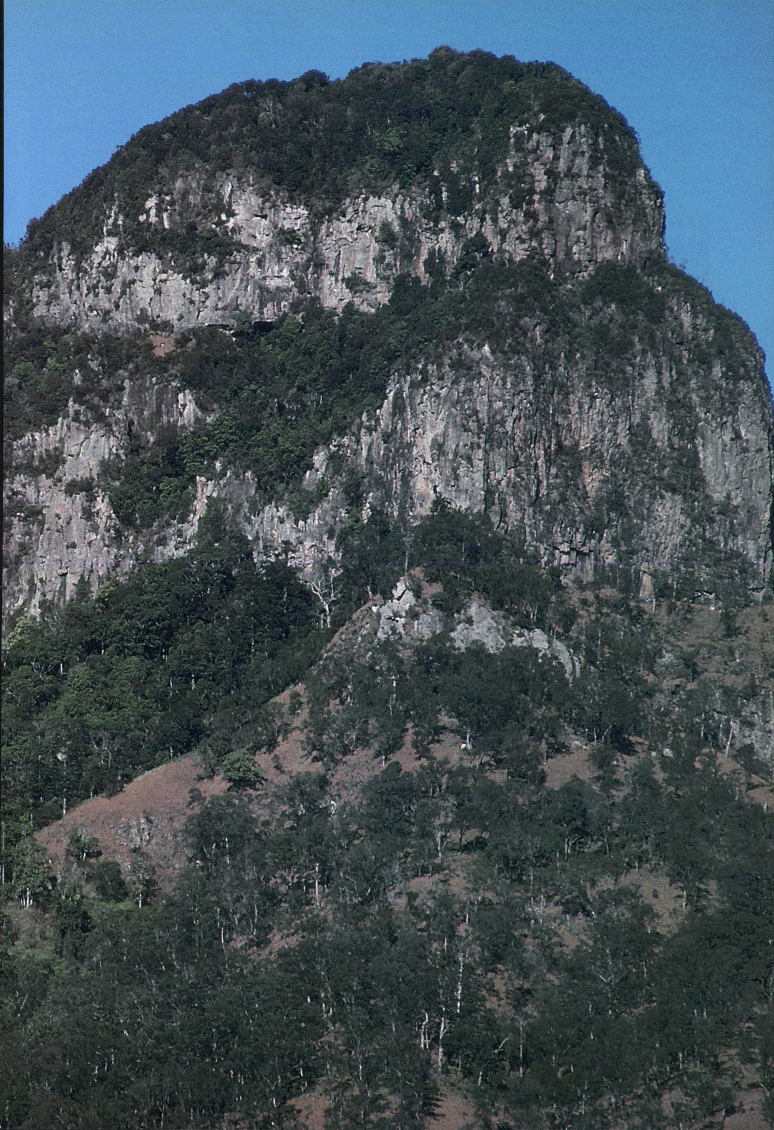
As another spring day begins, I start my descent with the aim of enjoying breakfast proper at my tent on the Béchervaise Plateau. Time again to suppress all the excitement and concentrate on the job at hand. Ignore the beguiling twinkle from Lake Geeves, 600 metres below the stitching round the sides of my boots. Remember all those other times I've been up and down here—like the first time I climbed the mountain with my eldest son; like the melodramatic ascent in 1978 when 'Fedder' in August was an ice-bound alpine giant; like my other solo ascent nearly 14 years ago; like the time we descended the Southern Traverse under an Easter moon; like the time we came up the Gorilla Ridge from the fairyland of the Old River valley; like... What about all those men and women with whom I've been safely to the top and back? Some only came once; others, like me, have come back again and again. When they do, I expect they remember their previous ascents, the fun we had and the sense of achievement. Such is the communion of the mountains.

Back on the plateau, I put in a day relaxing in the sunshine and continuing

wild bushwalking

TWIN PEAKS

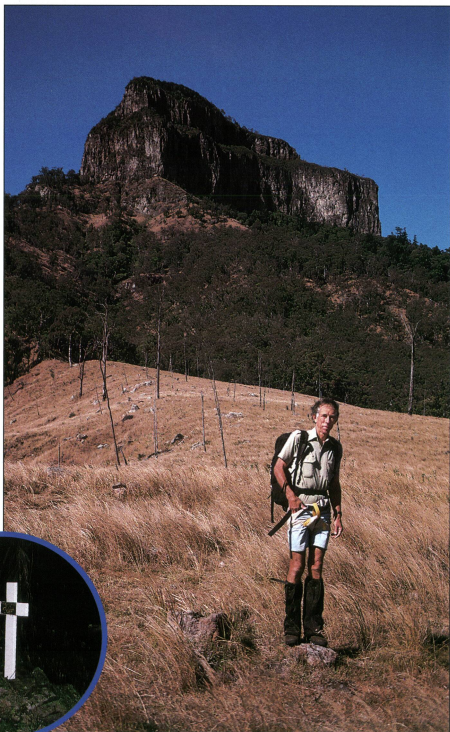
A special *Wild* feature on two of south-east
Queensland's most alluring peaks



TWIN PEAKS

NEGOTIATING THE BORDER GUARD

Peter Stockton tells how to breach the defences of the imposing Mt Lindesay on Queensland's southern frontier



As the tufts of cotton wool cloud lift away, the morning face of Mt Lindesay is revealed as a vast fortress, a magnificent rhyolite Masada.

Rising to 1177 metres, Mt Lindesay stands like a sentinel over the Queensland-New South Wales border 120 kilometres south of Brisbane. The summit of this spectacular mountain is encircled by tiers of high cliffs, conveying an air of impenetrability. However, it *can* be climbed through a break in those defences. Not technically difficult, the route is nevertheless steep and exposed and is more than just a vigorous bushwalk. Intending ascensionists will need basic rockclimbing skills and rope protection is necessary in places.

The author below Mt Lindesay at the end of the day. **Left**, the grave of Edwin Vidler, an early climber who fell to his death attempting to solo a new route. **Pages 40 and 41**, Mt Lindesay's rugged East Face. *All photos Peter Stockton collection*

Although subject to the forces of nature since its fiery Miocene genesis, Mt Lindesay still dominates the skyline for kilometres around. Arguably, it is southern Queensland's most distinctive peak. In the legends of local Aborigines it began its existence as a tea-tree, the steps in the mountain's clifflines representing foot-holes cut by a Dreamtime honey gatherer. Nowadays, the mountain is variously said to resemble a wedding cake, a crown pumpkin or a

couchant lion and depending on the observer's perspective each description is credible.

For intending climbers, to see Mt Lindesay up close is a real adrenalin shot and it is hardly surprising that the peak received early attention from the district's settlers. A two-man team of 'PW Pears and T de M Murray Prior' is credited with the first ascent in 1872, their scramble to the summit taking seven hours. Today the carefully protected visitors' book atop Mt Lindesay records about 100 signatures each year, reflecting the upsurge in outdoor activities in recent times. Even 25 years ago very few people made the climb.

A break in the lower (main) tier of cliffs at their south-eastern corner provides a practical way to the summit. The foot of this break is reached by way of the steep northern ridge which runs up from the Mt Lindesay Highway, followed by a traverse through magnificent rainforest beneath the eastern cliffline. Here, lucky climbers might listen enthralled to the evocative notes of Albert's lyrebird. An alternative approach to the same cliff break begins at the Collins Gap border gate a little further south along the highway. The traverse on this route is beneath the mountain's impressive southern cliffs.

Another route has been led successfully—the well-known but rarely attempted Vidlers Chimney. This feature is visible when traversing the eastern side of the mountain and takes its name from a young climber, Edwin Lyle Vidler, who fell to his death here during a solo attempt on Boxing Day 1928. A lonely cairn bearing a white, wooden cross marks the place where Vidler was laid to rest. So remote is this spot and so silent the lofty forest that it is difficult for the passer-by not to feel an abiding sadness.

Vidlers Chimney remained unclimbed until 1953 when a party of four made a successful ascent. Their leader, Jon Stephenson, later described the route as treacherously loose and dirty. A feel for history might tempt some people to repeat the climb, but otherwise Vidlers Chimney has little to recommend it.

The regular route through the cliff break mentioned above is itself steep and exposed, consisting of short rock pitches connected by a steep path. Navigationally, this section is not difficult to follow. For readers who are also technical climbers, several of the moves are of about grade 11 or 12 standard. Rope protection is considered mandatory although unroped ascents are not uncommon by those with the necessary skill, confidence and knowledge of the mountain. My friend Bruce Stoff is a Mt Lindesay veteran, having scaled its airy reaches on more than 100 occasions. The majority of these ascents have been made solo (unroped), often in bad weather. However, Bruce climbs the mountain with respect, keenly aware that it would instantly exact the ultimate penalty for any indiscretion.

At one point in the climb, the use of a horizontal banksia trunk to negotiate a

difficult corner lends something of a comic quality to the ascent—until one attempts the moves in morning drizzle at which time the joke pales! Higher up, in a climb which harks back to childhood, another tree is used to gain the top of a short, crumbling rock-band.

She-oaks, stunted in this lofty environment, are a feature of the main cliff's upper levels. Height is gained rapidly to this point and the views out through the shrubbery are magnificent. This is the domain of the mountain king and here the climber begins to feel an expansive, albeit premature, superiority.

Onwards through a scrubby shoulder, the route then contours left (south) to the foot of the accessible section of the upper cliffline. The degree of exposure is subtly masked by vegetation and one short pitch is particularly tricky even in dry conditions. In the wet it can be a real test and the odd, abandoned piece of climbing protection attests to its seriousness.

To climb this pitch is to win the mountain—for the rest is merely a trudge along a twisting path to the summit, disappointingly walled in by vegetation. One must climb a tree to obtain glimpses of the superb view to the north-west over Mts Barney and Maroon to the more distant peaks of the main Dividing Range. Alternatively, a five-minute walk in a roughly south-westerly direction is rewarded with a stupendous 300° panorama.

One descends by retracing the ascent route—a bit of extra caution is needed in down-climbing. Again, a roped return inside the cliff break is recommended.

Prospective ascensionists should allow a full day for the return trip but with practice it can be completed far more quickly. Bruce, climbing solo, has a personal best of 1 hour and 55 minutes, roadside to roadside! But there are no prizes for a speedy ascent and a more leisurely pace will enable the climber to enjoy the magnificent scenery which Mt Lindesay offers from its cliff-top vantage points.

Too exposed and technical for many bushwalkers yet not sufficiently challenging to the local rockclimbing 'hards', the route up Mt Lindesay does not receive the attention given to those on Mts Barney and Maroon nearby. For others, merely the sight of the mountain's seemingly impenetrable defences discourages any thought of attempting it. Nevertheless, with experienced, supportive leadership and the use of suitable protection Bruce alone has led dozens of climbers—as young as 10 years of age and as old as 65—to Mt Lindesay's summit for an unforgettable adventure unique in the south-east Queensland outdoors. ☀

Peter Stockton, 56, is an enthusiastic bushwalker and rockclimber with a love for the wild places of eastern Australia. He climbs as second to Bruce Stoff in a two-man *Dad's Army* rockclimbing team.

When to go

Visiting Mt Barney National Park in the cooler, less humid months is more appealing than to bear the heat and humidity of summer.

Maps

The 1:25 000 map titled *Mount Lindesay CMA/Sunmap* provides excellent detail for both Mt Lindesay and Mt Barney although no walking tracks are marked. Another 1:25 000 map, *Mt Barney Forestry Map*, is also very useful. Hand-outs available from the Queensland National Parks & Wildlife Service outline handy details such as local camping and bushwalking information, access and so on.

Access

Mt Barney National Park is about 140 kilometres south-west of Brisbane and access can be gained through Boonah or Rathdowney by way of Beaudesert.

Permits

At present a camping permit is required (\$3.00 a person/night) and may be obtained by contacting the Ranger at Boonah; phone (074) 63 5041.

Further reading

R Buchanan, *Bushpeople's Guide to South East Queensland*, Bushpeople Publications, 1991.

R Carlisle (ed), *The Mt Barney Guide*, University of Queensland Bushwalking Club, 1977. (Out of print.)

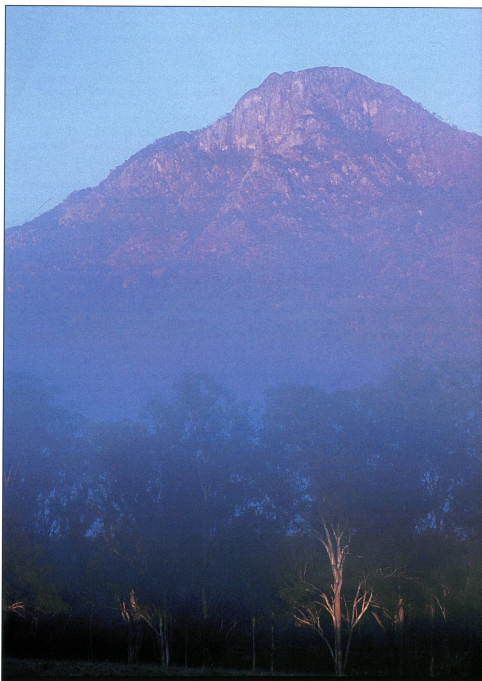
M Hammond and T Young, *The Bushwalkers Guide to South East Queensland*, Brisbane Bushwalkers Club, 1978. (Out of print.)

T Thomas, *50 Walks in the Coffs Harbour and Gold Coast Hinterland*, Hill of Content, 1993.

TWIN PEAKS

BIG DAY ON BARNEY

A skyline traverse of
Queensland's most
sought-after summit,
by *Hector McLean*



I'd heard talk about walking the skyline of south-east Queensland's Mt Barney on different trips during the last few years but in my mind the details were sketchy. Rumour had it that it's very hard. Alby Frost, a bushwalking 'old timer' who'd conceived the walk in the mid-1950s, was turning 60 and wanted to do it again.

As plans take shape among a few friends the enthusiasm that encompasses the build-up to one of these events catches me. Without actually knowing what I'm getting into I'm leaving Brisbane for Mt Barney. It is 3.45 am.

By 6 am we are hefting day packs in the Mt Barney National Park car park. We're about to traverse the 12 peaks of the Mt Barney skyline. There are six of us, Allan (Alby) Frost, Duncan Steele, Chris (Frosty) Frost, Robert Rankin, Bill Lukin and I. The Frosts suggest that we take more water; someone makes a joke about getting

started or we could run out of daylight. Can this be true? Just how far is it? And in what shape is Alby, really?

I lead off as we start the 45-minute walk to the Lower Portals. Within the first 500 metres Alby and Rob can be heard joking about these young pups setting a cracking pace at the beginning of the day. Alby must be feeling pretty old today because none of the 'pups' are under thirty.

The track is worn and dusty, an environmental disaster on a minor scale. It becomes a watercourse when it rains, carving away the thin topsoil to form an ever expanding gulch. The bush in late autumn is tinder dry, the ground covered in patchy grass and a thin layer of dry leaves.

At the Barney Creek crossing we have our last chance to fill water-bottles before the real walk begins. The march up Eagles Ridge starts in fine style. A slight track is discernible on the stony ground. We surge



Early morning fog surrounds the East Face of Mt Barney. All photos Robert Rankin

up the first few, minor peaks and clatter down the steep descents, dropping into lush and protected saddles, the soil rich with sediment and the decay of the forest's growth. There is no wind in those quiet corners and the air is redolent with the smell of rotting vegetation. Or is it human faeces? I can never tell. But it is certainly time that we started to carry all our waste from these highly used National Parks.

The group spreads out; some walk in pairs, talking; others are left alone to their thoughts and the expanse of the mountain ahead and around them.

By the time most of us get to the top of Isolated Peak, or North East Rock as it's called on the map, Frosty has dropped back to see what is slowing Robert down. As we catch our breath and wait for the others Alby points across a gorge to one of the original ways up Leaning Peak. It's a difficult-looking traverse across a gash in the

scrub on the mountain's East Face. This is followed by a nasty-looking scramble up a gully on to the peak. Today we take another route. The original idea for this walk had been to take two days and to break the walk by camping at Rum Jungle. This was the very challenge that Alby, Peter Barnes and Geoff Goadby embarked upon in late November 1954 after their university exams.

'We were really unfit. We hadn't done any exercise for months', Alby says. 'You can imagine how hot it was in November going up that long ridge on to Isolated Peak with packs.'

Isolated Peak was as far as they got on that occasion.

'We got up there at about 2 pm and there was no decision making at all; we looked at each other and headed down to the cool of Barney Creek.'

Alby hadn't achieved his desire to walk the skyline of Mt Barney. It wasn't until the late 1960s that he had a chance to try again. Dispensing with the plan for an intermediate camp he decided they'd travel light and do it in one day. His companions were Tim Cassidy and Barry Smith. This time they managed to complete the traverse and get back to Barney Creek in about 11 and a half hours, but ran out of light. With only one torch it took them five hours of rock-hopping to get back to the car. We are hoping that this will not be our fate today.

Meanwhile we have reached a steep bit and it is decided that the non-rockclimbers should rope up, donkey-disaster style. (This is when two or more people are roped together and belayed up the steep bit. If one falls, the others are destined to follow.) Alby and I are roped together and perform a strange pull-and-tug routine up the rocks. When I get to the top I stand on a rotten grass-tree stump and just about send the whole thing, myself included, trundling down on to Robert, who's been videoing the climbing antics. I finally get clear with a

'The scrub is thick and spiky. The track is obvious one moment and we've lost it the next and are crashing through the scrub. It doesn't let up...'

bit of colourful encouragement from Frosty. It seems that a single donkey can cause disaster.

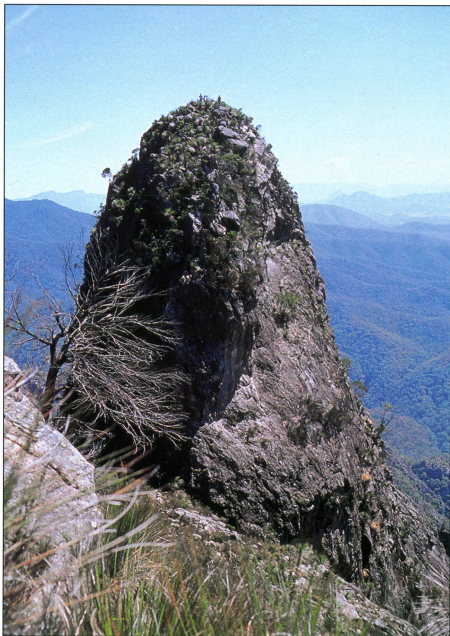
The next part of the walk is an intense and exhilarating scramble. The holds are mercifully large on the more exposed sections that approximate true rockclimbing. Over my shoulder there's a view to the east-north-east. The rock walls of Mt Barney fall away to the timbered country below, then on to the cleared valley floor and on further into the timbered hills beyond. Hardly time to look as I move on, my lungs pumping and my system demanding food. Alby is below taking a different route. It's a traverse through some really spiky bush to the Comino-Waring Ledge.

Bill and Duncan breeze out on to the ledge with almost careless abandon. Alby scrambles out dragging his new rope which impresses us so much that no one thinks to put him on belay. At least in his mind he is probably feeling very safe. Frosty ties me to another rope and I follow him on to the ledge. At the end of the ledge there's a short, low-grade rockclimb to negotiate.

Alby and I are tied together again. With less slack rope between us this time our Laurel-and-Hardy routine is accentuated. He's either pulling me off my position or I've got my head rammed between his legs. With little dignity intact we make it without a fall and walk the final section of track to the top of Leaning Peak.

The abseil off Leaning Peak is light entertainment before a short rest in the saddle. Frosty tells us how he abseiled off here when he was five years old, using the old-fashioned, over-the-shoulder abseiling technique. We're all a bit stunned by this. Bill chides Alby about how many of his kids he'd lost during his mountain-climbing capers.

Reinvigorated we step out toward North Pinnacle. Alby's got plenty of breath to tell more stories about the early days. It had rankled with him that he, Tim Cassidy and Barry Smith had taken five hours to rock-hop out during that trip in the late 1960s.



Climbers on the summit of Leaning Peak. **Right**, admiring the view from North Pinnacle.

party, who was in some distress carrying a big pack.

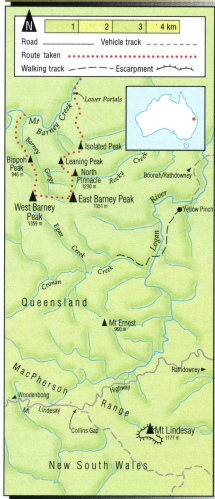
'I ended up carrying his pack from there out to the car', Alby says. 'He was a bit tired.'

We reach the top of North Pinnacle and find some shade for a quick lunch-break. The walk from North Pinnacle to East Peak is across an open expanse of rock. Unfortunately, at this time of year all the small pools and the vegetation have dried out.

I stop to tie my shoelace. Alby's on hand to buzz me about resting. 'Get' and 'old' are the only words of my reply that can be repeated.

At the top of East Peak I'm beginning to feel my legs. Alby, who's been a little slow on the ascents, is looking fine. Robert, who'd been dragging the chain earlier, is up with everyone now. He says this is one of the hardest one-day walks in south-east Queensland. He should know! He's run, walked and photographed this area for 20 years.

Mt Barney National Park



He decided to do the walk again, this time by himself. He set off with a party who took a different track but whom he hoped to meet later in the day at Rum Jungle.

'It didn't seem like I was walking fast, but I got to the top of Isolated Peak in two hours, at 8 am', Alby says. 'I was at the top of Leaning Peak by 10 am.'

'For some reason I didn't want to tackle Comino Ledge by myself, so I went across that gash I pointed out when we were on the top of Isolated and went up that way.'

When he made the traverse from Leaning Peak to the top of East Peak in an hour and a half he realised that he was making very good time and slowed down.

'I was down in Barney Creek by 2.15 pm', Alby says. 'So it took about 8 hours and 20 minutes.'

On the rock-hop along Barney Creek he came across a lone fellow from the other

Duncan sets a cracking pace on the descent from East Peak. As we catch our breath in the saddle, near the remains of a hut, a few predictions fly around about when we'll finish. My feet are beginning to hurt now and we have two peaks and a long ridge to descend. The predictions sound ominous.

On the ascent up West Peak Duncan and I get into some really thick leaf matter in Rum Jungle. It's like walking in deep snow. We finally get on to the rocks and catch the others. In contrast to the open expanses of rock on the rest of Mt Barney, West Peak is more heavily timbered. Duncan rests on a nest of vicious ants he hasn't seen in the scrub. The ants savage his inside leg, which causes much hilarity in the group as he tries to get rid of them.

On top of West Peak most of us finish our water. In the morning three litres each had seemed more than enough. The long descent to Midget Peak begins. The scrub is thick and spiky. The track is obvious one moment and we've lost it the next and are crashing through the scrub. It doesn't let up. There's talk of it being clear below Midget but after passing this summit it's more of the same. My feet really hurt and I'm falling behind. Despite this Robert is somewhere behind me. If Alby's hurting no one would know it; it's a descent and he's going with

the flow. The others surge ahead, then wait but just as I reach them they are off again. I clump on, my steps getting shorter like those of a lame old horse.

Finally I catch up to them and they wait; someone says he can hear the creek. We walk through some scrub and small lantana bushes and we have arrived at our next-to-last goal. Alby has continued further down the ridge and hits the creek about 100 metres upstream from us. Robert materialises from the scrub and is with us again.

After the wild jazz of the scrub on the ridge, the creek is singing a calm and soothing tune. This and the cool, clear water rejuvenate us.

In Alby's terms the walk is technically over; it's taken ten and a half hours but we still have a long way to go to the cars. The light begins to fade as the rock-hop toward the Lower Portals begins—Alby's thoughts must be turning to that other time, 25 years ago.

The creek-level is quite low, yet it's still a beautiful collection of dark, tranquil pools and small rapids. Mt Barney towers above us. Unfortunately, much of this beauty is lost on us as our race against the light requires most of our attention.

Alby, Bill, Frosty and Duncan are waiting at the Lower Portals when I arrive. The light has almost gone and we decide to move on

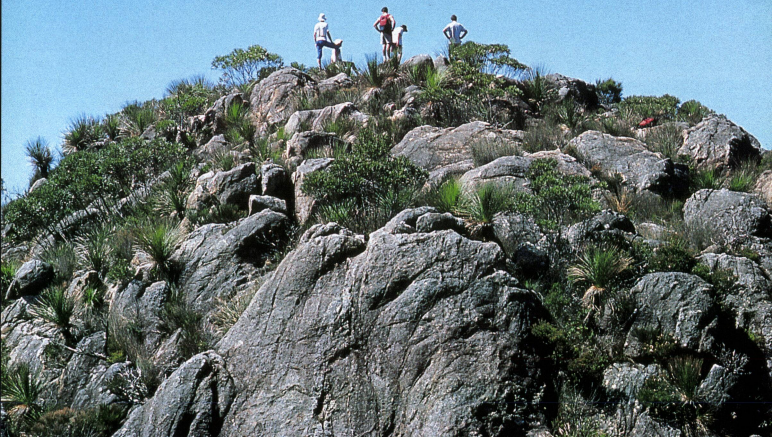
quickly. Robert is behind us somewhere but he knows the area well and has a good torch.

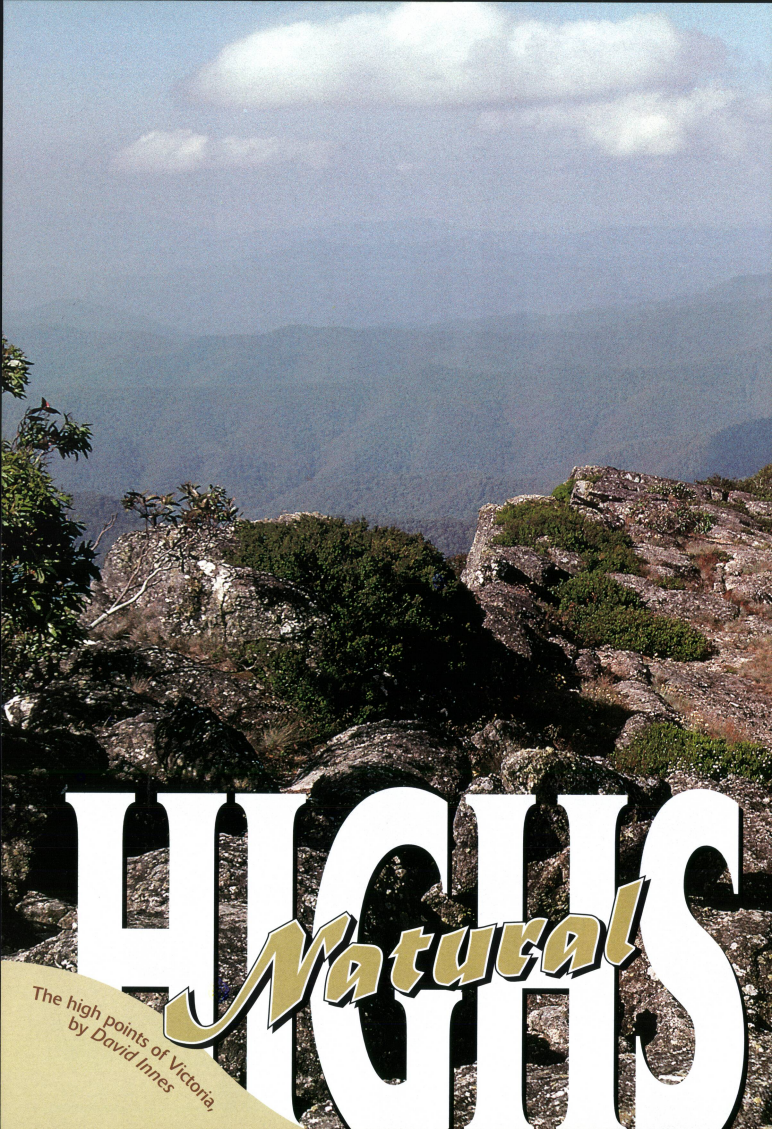
The jump up at the Lower Portals is steep. We leave Alby to set his own pace. On the descent the others disappear into the night. My feet are like painful chunks of wood as I clunk down the steep slope.

The five of us regroup at the bottom and walk by torchlight to the cars in close formation. It seems to take a long time. We arrive at the car park and it's taken 13 and a half hours to get back. Robert walks in ten minutes later. I discover I only have four blisters although two are the size of 20-cent pieces. Alby seems no more tired than the rest of us—the man must be made of barbed wire.

The Mt Barney skyline is a brilliant and exhilarating walk. It requires a high degree of fitness and a certain amount of stamina. A smaller party and an earlier departure from the car park would enable most people to return in daylight. Apart from that, I recommend that you wear comfortable shoes! I look forward to doing it again when Alby turns seventy. 🏔️

Hector McLean is a journalist who lives in Queensland. Once a sugar-cane farmer, he studied for four years in Brisbane before returning to the Mackay area where he has spent much time walking in nearby Eungella National Park. He has been involved in outdoors activities for the past 20 years and has visited many popular bushwalking destinations in eastern Australia.



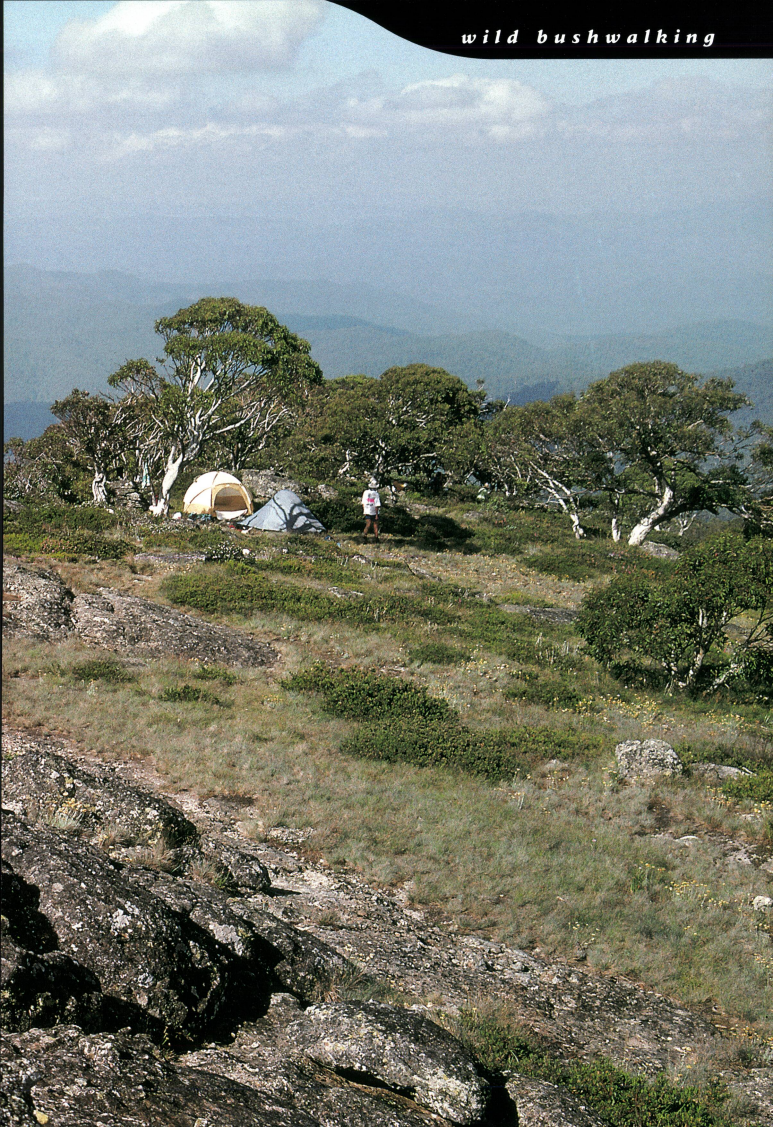


HIGH

Natural

PLACES

The high points of Victoria,
by David Innes



Since my childhood in the 1960s I have been fascinated by mountains—I do not know why! I pored over books about them, I could name the tallest mountains in many countries of the world and I knew most of the major Australian peaks. As a college student I doted over *A Message from Aranachala* by Paul Brunton.

told me the story of how he looked at a map of Australia, decided that Albury was a city near the mountains and chose to move there. At last count he had climbed Mt Bogong more than 200 times. How many of us have climbed it more than once?

So why are so many people captivated by a mountain? George Mallory's famous quote 'because it is there' epitomises the need they feel. The British mountaineer Geoffrey Young described a mountain as 'earth set on earth a little higher'. To judge a mountain purely by its height is to miss the point. There are real (although comparatively low) mountains in countries such as the UK and, indeed, Australia.

On a warm November day in 1988 I tackled the daunting four-peaks race centred around the tourist town of Bright in north-east Victoria. The race ascends Mts Porepunkah, Feathertop, Hotham and Buffalo on four successive days.

At that race I met an amiable and dedicated English fell runner named Jonathon Broxap. Jon had lived in Bright only a few months with his Australian wife, Kate. Somehow, despite living in the same town and using the same tracks for training, we had never met before and a friendship soon developed.

Jon talked of the wonderful hills of the English Lake District where he had been born and raised and of his beloved Scottish hills where he spent much of his leisure time. Jon's thorough explanations and intimate knowledge of the British peaks planted a seed in the minds of myself and a close friend, Phillip Barnes. And thus the idea of compiling a list of peaks for Victoria was born.

In each part of the British Isles a list is kept of the definitive peaks—and in Scotland even of those people who have climbed them all. Scotland has its famous 277 'Munros', England its 'tops', Wales its 'peaks' and Ireland its 'summits'. Now, thanks to Bill Wilkinson's recent book of the same name, Tasmania has its 155 'Abels'.

In 1891 Sir Hugh Munro compiled his *Munro's Tables of the 300 Feet Mountains of Scotland*. Many are marvellous peaks even if comparatively low by world standards. They provide a great challenge to those who devote the considerable time and energy required for the task of climbing as many of them as they can. Since 1992 the record time for bagging them all has stood at the still considerable 51 days by Roy Gibson and Andrew Johnston. This entailed 120 000 vertical metres of climbing, 1500 kilometres on foot, 1200 kilometres by bike and even a return swim across Loch Lomond!

Sir Hugh Munro never published his criteria. His probable aim was to produce a list that he hoped would be beyond dispute. Nevertheless, there was soon much conjecture about how and why he chose certain peaks over other, more obvious, ones. Subsequently the list was slightly altered when new and quality maps were



Walkers on Mt Magdala. Mt Buller behind. *Chris Baxter.* **Top**, the Sentinel, left, and Spion Kopje from Mt Wellington. *Glenn van der Knijff.* **Right**, the Bluff. *Stephen Curtain.* **Pages 48 and 49**, high on Mt Cobbler, *van der Knijff.* **Pages 52 and 53 background**, Victorian mountain sunset. *Glenn Tempest*

The author lived near a small hill in India and philosophised about the world—the hill being the symbol that provided the catalyst for the book's development.

I have been fascinated by other people's attraction to the mountains. A friend of mine, Max Scherleitrner, migrated from Austria in the 1950s and lives in Albury. He



Peak	Height, metres	Grid reference	Natmap 1:100 000 (or other series) map	Wild references
1 Mt Bogong	1986	272346	<i>Bogong</i>	2, 9, 25, 33, 44 guidebook, 48 Tk Notes, 52
2 Hooker Plateau	1974	257340	<i>Bogong</i>	as above
3 West Peak	1962	247337	<i>Bogong</i>	as above
4 Mt Feathertop	1922	122167	<i>Bogong</i>	1, 17, 20, 33 Tk Notes, 44 guidebook, 48, 60 Tk Notes
5 Nelse massif	1891	288238	<i>Bogong</i>	2, 9, 14, 25, 33 Tk Notes, 44
6 Mt Loch	1887	138098	<i>Bogong</i>	20, 33 Tk Notes, 44, 49, 61 Tk Notes
7 Mt Fainter South	1883	168212	<i>Bogong</i>	22, 25, 33 Tk Notes, 44 guidebook
8 Knoll west of Round Plain	1874	304246	<i>Bogong</i>	
9 Mt Hotham	1868	114077	<i>Bogong</i>	9, 9 Folio, 44 guidebook, 49
10 Mt Niggerhead	1852	170171	<i>Bogong</i>	22, 25, 33 Tk Notes, 44 guidebook
11 Mt McKay	1849	216188	<i>Bogong</i>	
12 Mt Cope	1837	250130	<i>Bogong</i>	25
13 Mt Spion Kopje	1837	251240	<i>Bogong</i>	33 Tk Notes, 44 guidebook
14 Mt Cobberas No 1	1833	027194	<i>Suggan Buggan**</i>	13, 43, 44 guidebook, 51, 53, 60
15 Knoll north of Mt Jim	1831	190155	<i>Bogong</i>	44 guidebook
16 Marns Point	1819	306192	<i>Bogong</i>	33 Tk Notes
17 Knoll on Timms Spur	1814	279266	<i>Bogong</i>	33 Tk Notes
18 Mt Higginbotham	1814	128063	<i>Bogong</i>	
19 Hollonds Knob	1813	312200	<i>Bogong</i>	33 Tk Notes
20 Mt Buller	1805	489887	<i>Buller South*</i>	9 Folio, 25, 40, 40 (West Ridge)
21 High Knob	1801	118145	<i>Bogong</i>	33 Tk Notes, 44 guidebook, 60 Tk Notes
22 Knoll on Heathy Spur	1800+	296204	<i>Bogong</i>	33 Tk Notes
23 Rocky Knobs	1797	250166	<i>Bogong</i>	33 Tk Notes
24 Mt Pinnibar	1771	896560	<i>Jacobs River</i>	59
25 Knoll on Davies Plain Ridge south	1758	975369	<i>Jacobs River</i>	
26 Mt Wills	1757	421257	<i>Bogong</i>	44 guidebook
27 Mt Gibbo	1750	858476	<i>Benambra</i>	
28 Knoll south of Mt Stirling	1748	553907	<i>Buller South*</i>	22, 25 Folio, 40
29 Mt Howitt	1742	686856	<i>Howitt-Selwyn**</i>	7 Tk Notes, 23 Folio, 25, 32, 44 guidebook, 47, 49, 54, 57 Tk Notes
30 Dansite Hill	1740+	219174	<i>Bogong</i>	
31 Little Baldy	1728	104067	<i>Bogong</i>	
32 The Bluff	1726	548788	<i>Buller South*</i>	25, 28, 44 guidebook, 57 Tk Notes, 58
33 Knoll on Davies Plain Ridge north	1725	023406	<i>Jacobs River</i>	
34 Mt Cobberas No 2	1725	025235	<i>Suggan Buggan**</i>	44 guidebook
35 Mt Magdala	1725	663839	<i>Howitt-Selwyn**</i>	7 Tk Notes, 57 Tk Notes, 44 guidebook, 47, 57 Tk Notes
36 The Horn	1723	791297	<i>Buffalo</i>	
37 Knoll on Blue Rag Range	1718	046942	<i>Dargo Plains-Cobungra**</i>	44 guidebook
38 Grey Hills Knob	1712	248275	<i>Bogong</i>	
39 King Billy No 1	1710	645822	<i>Howitt-Selwyn**</i>	44 guidebook, 57 Tk Notes, 58
40 Knoll on Paw Paw Plain	1710	162033	<i>Dargo Plains-Cobungra**</i>	
41 Mt Reynard	1710	756609	<i>Tambaritha-Maroka**</i>	9, 22 Tk Notes, 47
42 Knoll on Crosscut Saw	1705	684872	<i>Howitt-Selwyn**</i>	32, 44 guidebook, 47, 49, 54, 57 Tk Notes
43 The Twins	1703	050024	<i>Dargo Plains-Cobungra**</i>	31, 31 Tk Notes, 42, 44 guidebook
44 Mt Clear	1695	621751	<i>Tambaritha-Maroka**</i>	58
45 The Hump	1695	808318	<i>Buffalo</i>	
46 Mt Eadley Stoney	1684	567805	<i>Howitt-Selwyn**</i>	44 guidebook, 57 Tk Notes
47 Mt Lovick	1684	603815	<i>Howitt-Selwyn**</i>	44 guidebook, 57 Tk Notes, 58
48 Moscow Peak	1680+	019217	<i>Suggan Buggan**</i>	44 guidebook
49 Knoll east of Buckety Plain	1679	317118	<i>Bogong</i>	
50 Mt Blue Rag	1679	105947	<i>Dargo Plains-Cobungra**</i>	
51 Mt Arthur	1677	239291	<i>Bogong</i>	44 guidebook
52 Mt Speculation	1668	683910	<i>Howitt-Selwyn**</i>	7 Tk Notes, 25, 31, 31 Tk Notes, 32, 44 guidebook, 47, 49, 54, 57 Tk Notes
53 Rene Lookout	1668	092044	<i>Dargo Plains-Cobungra**</i>	
54 Mt Wombargo	1665	050108	<i>Suggan Buggan**</i>	60
55 Mt Little Bogong	1661	231348	<i>Bogong</i>	44 guidebook
56 Rams Head Range	1661	013157	<i>Suggan Buggan**</i>	
57 Mt Anderson	1660+	875479	<i>Benambra</i>	

	Peak	Height, metres	Grid reference	Natmap 1:100 000 (or other series) map	Wild references
58	Big Hill	1658	681844	Howitt-Selwyn**	44 guidebook, 47, 57 Tk Notes
59	Knoll east of Macalister Springs	1657	714851	Howitt-Selwyn**	
60	Knoll north-east of Mt Misery	1650	867247	Benambra	60
61	Knoll south of Mt Cobberas No 2	1650	026225	Suggan Buggan**	
62	Knoll east of Mt Freezeout	1646	098005	Dargo Plains-Cobungra**	
63	Knoll south-west of The Twins	1646	042016	Dargo Plains-Cobungra**	42, 44 guidebook
64	Knoll west of Guys Hut	1642	750731	Tamboritha-Moroka**	47
65	Knoll south of Bald Hill	1635	168246	Bogong	
66	Le Souef Peak	1635	814323	Buffalo	
67	Mt Murray	1634	992977	Howitt-Selwyn**	31, 31 Tk Notes, 42, 44 guidebook
68	Mt Wellington	1634	863487	Licola-Wellington**	
69	Knoll on Mt Misery Track	1631	902273	Suggan Buggan**	
70	Corn Hill	1630	532880	Buller South*	
71	Mt Cobbler	1628	634001	Howitt-Selwyn**	40, 40 Tk Notes, 44 guidebook, 47, 57 Tk Notes
72	Blue Hill	1620+	988128	Suggan Buggan**	
73	Mt McDonald	1620	525730	Mansfield	58
74	Mt Nunniang	1620	914932	Deception-Deddick**	60
75	Big Hill	1600+	040137	Suggan Buggan**	
76	Knoll south of the Horn	1600+	799291	Buffalo	
77	Rams Horn	1600+	999149	Suggan Buggan**	35 Folio, 44 guidebook
78	Mt Buggery	1600	680891	Howitt-Selwyn**	32, 44 guidebook, 47, 49, 54, 57 Tk Notes
79	Trappyard Hill	1598	882516	Tamboritha-Moroka**	
80	Mt Koonika	1594	667934	Howitt-Selwyn**	44 guidebook, 47, 57 Tk Notes
81	Mt Tabletop	1593	184990	Dargo Plains-Cobungra**	59
82	Mt Sassafras	1587	740503	Benambra	
83	The Monument	1582	575923	Howitt-Selwyn**	40
84	Mt Arbuckle	1581	801580	Tamboritha-Moroka**	47
85	Mt Skene	1570	455575	Mansfield	
86	Knoll west of Mt Sugarloaf	1569	023057	Bogong	
87	Johnnies Top	1567	743323	Benambra	
88	Mt St Phillack	1567	278125	Matlock	17 Tk Notes
89	Gable End	1565	825417	Licola-Wellington**	
90	Mt Baw Baw	1563	361117	Matlock	17 Tk Notes
91	Mt Kent	1561	971586	Tamboritha-Moroka**	39, 40 guidebook
92	Mt No 3	1560	488985	Buller North*	
93	Brumby Hill	1556	879023	Ormeo	
94	Mt Sarah	1552	969864	Howitt-Selwyn**	
95	Knoll south of Mt Hope	1550	892405	Benambra	
96	Knoll south-east of Rocky Knob	1543	846569	Tamboritha-Moroka**	
97	Ulrich Peak	1539	775373	Buffalo	
98	Knoll south of Mt Darling	1536	853748	Tamboritha-Moroka**	36 Tk Notes
99	Mt Phipps	1536	386820	Dargo Plains-Cobungra**	
100	Mt McLeod	1529	811387	Buffalo	
101	Mt Winstanley	1523	514937	Buller North*	
102	Knoll north of Buenia Ck	1522	765408	Benambra	
103	The Viking	1519	748917	Howitt-Selwyn**	31, 31 Tk Notes, 35 Folio, 41, 49, 54
104	Talbot Peak	1516	420080	Matlock	17 Tk Notes
105	Mt Torbreck	1514	058647	Alexandra	
106	Basalt Knob	1512	078886	Dargo Plains-Cobungra**	
107	Sugarloaf	1511	047063	Bogong	
108	Mt Tamboritha	1509	731526	Tamboritha-Moroka**	
109	The Knocker	1506	475188	Benambra	
110	Mt Boebuck	1500+	880624	Corryong	

Wild references have been given when an article or information about the relevant peak has appeared in *Wild*. (Articles are listed only when they give specific information about the peak or if a route described crosses the peak.) When the peak is referred to in *Wild* Track Notes, a *Wild* Folio or a *Wild* guidebook this is indicated after the relevant issue number. * 1:25 000 ** 1:50 000

VICTORIA'S PREMIER PEAKS—DAVID INNES'S CRITERIA

From the outset we realised that the Victorian mountains were distributed over a larger area than those in the UK and would consequently be more difficult to classify. For starters, many of our peaks are remote and seldom visited. Unlike the UK's peaks many of those in Victoria are choked with scrub and often a considerable distance from help in the event of an emergency. A meticulous and familiar knowledge of navigation would be essential to any aspiring collector of these peaks.

In attempting to classify what constitutes a mountain I loosely based my findings on the classifications used in Scotland, England, Ireland and Wales but amended my criteria to account for the different types of peaks we find here; for example, the Great Divide often appears more like a gigantic, eroded, dissected plateau than a series of individual peaks.

My criteria were principally based on the number of contours which would noticeably distinguish a peak from its surroundings. So:

- Peaks of over 1900 metres require at least two contours.
- Peaks of 1800–1899 metres require at least three contours.
- Peaks of 1700–1799 metres require at least four contours.
- Peaks of 1600–1699 metres require at least five contours.
- Peaks of 1500–1599 metres require at least six contours.

At first I chose the 1000 metre contour as the lower limit but then decided that due to the difficulty of access for the 230-odd peaks thus included and the time required to climb them all, a stricter cut-off was required. A figure of 1500 metres approximates the winter snowline in the Victorian Alps and eliminates the difficulty of climbing through sometimes thick scrub in remote places just to gain a tick on the list. Bill Wilkinson used a similar criterion for his list of the Abels in Tasmania (although he used a 1100 metre cut-off).

Beyond that, I shall not attempt to justify the additional criteria I have used to select the peaks. Suffice it to say that they are based on certain esoteric formulae. For example, I added notable and named peaks because the Europeans who named our mountains did some unusual things such as giving names to points like Mt Jim, which is overshadowed by a higher, unnamed point nearby as are several other peaks such as Mt Misery and Bald Hill.

introduced early this century. However, his original list and tables are still considered to be important (and practical!) historical documents.

Once I had established my criteria (see box on this page) and Phil and Jon had agreed to them, the test was to confirm whether the system could work in Victoria. The list was compiled over five years of arduous and often frustrating work pondering over numerous maps and completing and re-doing tables many times.

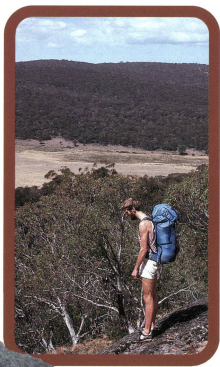
When 1990 approached we were ready to make our first 'bagging' trip and on 3 January three friends and I set off for a run along the Blue Rag ridge. The heavy but high cloud, distant rolling thunder and a strong, gusty, south-west wind belied the 45°C heat of the valleys below. Less than an hour later we stood astride Blue Rag Knoll, jubilant in the magnificent panorama that was accentuated by the afternoon sun punctuating the clouds. Having climbed the first peak of my Victorian list made the occasion even more memorable. (I had climbed many of the peaks before but decided to begin them again from 1990 onwards.)

Unlike that in Britain, the vegetation of the Victorian Alps presents the greatest obstacle to both easy access and navigation. Some peaks will cause anxiety because the summits are large, flattish and the approaches may be covered in dense forest with the same appearance in every direction. At such times the realisation that

help is distant can produce an unsettling feeling.

Conversely, most Victorian mountains are easily climbed in terms of terrain. In Victoria we have few peaks that can compare with the grandeur of the craggy, glaciated forms of the An Teallach ridge, a sawtooth of ice-etched rock rising abruptly from the surrounding west Scotland lowlands; and the Inaccessible Pinnacle on Sgurr Dearg on the Isle of Skye—complete with hundreds of metres of near-vertical rock cliffs and detritus in the valley below—is as near to mountaineering as the walker is likely (or dares) to go.

But the grandeur of Mt Bogong or the winter view from Mt Hotham always leaves me with a desire to stay longer. I have visited the Himalayas, the Southern Alps of New Zealand and the Alps of Europe. All are undoubtedly spectacular mountain ranges but in their own way our peaks are still marvellous. I can stand atop many of



them in awe of what I see. In the lofty mountain ranges of other countries I can only look up, or perhaps climb a few. The rest belong to the mountain gods.

Some wonderful places and experiences await the intrepid traveller to the Victorian Alps. I have been lucky enough to experience memorable moments that I will cherish for a lifetime. A violent thunderstorm on the Crosscut Saw, sunrise from Mt Feathertop, and the solitude and grandeur of Mt Bogong.

As in Munro's Scottish mountains, one can spend a speedy 51 days—or a lifetime—pursuing Victoria's peaks. I have only climbed 50 in five years and expect to spend the rest of this decade completing the task. I don't mind. Some are wonderful peaks because of their summits, views, vegetation, difficulty, special approach, or for other personal reasons. Some are unassuming, viewless hills that serve only to frustrate the climber and merely add



“I have been lucky enough to experience memorable moments that I will cherish for a lifetime. A violent thunderstorm on the Crosscut Saw, sunrise from Mt Feathertop, and the solitude and grandeur of Mt Bogong.”

On Mt Fainter, Bogong High Plains behind, *van der Knijff*. **Top right**, another view of the Bogong High Plains, this time from Mt Loch, *Baxter*. **Bottom right**, the summit of Mt Cobberas No 1, *Baxter*. **Left bottom**, West Peak from Little Bogong, *van der Knijff*. **Left top**, former *Wild Art* Director Michael Collie surveying the Snowy Plains from Mt Reynard, *Baxter*

another tick to the list. To me they still retain the same majesty and wonder they did the first time I climbed a big one. They are big, they are wild and they are yours and mine. 🏔️

David Innes lives in Bright in north-east Victoria. Passionate about the mountains, he has run, skied, ridden and walked many of the peaks of the High Country; he has also walked in Tasmania, in the Himalayas and on New Zealand's South Island. He is at present writing a book about the peaks of Victoria.



Walking on

Jim Daniels takes a look at the 'bushwalking' possibilities on offer in Antarctica



the Moon

Antarctica is a unique and extremely isolated environment. Some consider it to be a last frontier, an untouched wilderness unexplored by humans. Although the great era of Antarctic exploration is over, natural hazards still abound in this vast wilderness. Here, civilisation's safety net is at its thinnest and even relatively simple tasks can become potentially dangerous unless done correctly.

Antarctica is a land of extremes: it is the highest, driest, coldest, windiest and most remote land mass on earth. The further inland you go the higher and colder it becomes. At the edge of Antarctica in the coastal regions the annual mean temperature is -12°C . However, in the higher regions where the altitude approaches 4000 metres above sea level the average annual mean temperature drops to -60°C . The lowest surface temperature ever recorded in nature is -89°C , at the Russian Vostok station within the Australian Antarctic Territory.

Most of the Antarctic is devoid of life and signs of human technology. The continent is covered by a continuous ice-sheet more than 5000 kilometres across and rising more than 3000 metres above sea level. Underneath this icy mantle is a hidden topography of valleys, plains and mountains. Only a few of the highest peaks protrude above the ice-cap. The continental ice-sheet is nothing more than accumulated snow which over hundreds of thousands of years has formed a large dome of ice. Thousands of glaciers extend into the sea at the edge of Antarctica, their steady flow causing great pieces of ice to break off and drift away as icebergs which can be several kilometres long. Not surpris-



ingly, Antarctica contains the world's largest glacier, the Lambert.

While 98 per cent of Antarctica's surface consists of ice, a few ice-free areas—representing less than two per cent of the continent—provide refuges for wildlife. In some of these areas permanent stations have been established. The Vestfold Hills in the Australian Antarctic Territory are such an ice-free area. Bounded by the Antarctic ice-sheet, the Sorsdal Glacier and the Indian Ocean, the Vestfold Hills comprise 410 square kilometres. They have a low, rugged topography and contain numerous freshwater and saline lakes, some below sea level. The area also features three peninsulas subtended by three deep fjords and many offshore islands. The region is somewhat dwarfed by the sur-

rounding continental ice-sheet which rises up steadily toward the interior of Antarctica and is visible from kilometres out at sea. Only after getting close to the edge of the continent is the ice-free area of the Vestfold Hills apparent as a landscape of low, rocky hills. These ice-free outcrops are vital for wildlife.

Left, a perfect table? **Above**, exhibiting 'the right stuff' during inclement weather in a field camp of 'apples' at Marine Plain. All photos Jim Daniels



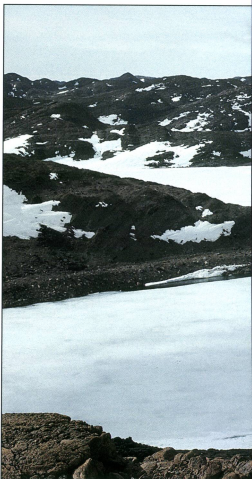
The Vestfold Hills were discovered in 1935 by Karius Mikkelsen on board the Norwegian whaling ship *Thorshavn* and were photographed from the air and mapped by Lars Christensen's expedition in 1936-37. The first landing by an Australian National Antarctic Research Expedition was in 1954 at a site north of the current Australian research station Davis (latitude 68° 35' south, longitude 77° 58' east) established in 1957. Davis is permanently occupied by Australian expeditioners and was set up to support scientific research.

In the summer of 1993-94 I was privileged to be based in the Vestfold Hills as a palaeontologist studying vertebrate fossils that outcrop in parts of the Vestfold Hills. I was excited at the prospect of visiting the Antarctic and was eager to dispel some of the myth and hype surrounding 'The Great White Hell' and to find out for myself what it was like. I was able to spend a great deal of time walking and prospecting in this unique place. In summer, when there are 24 hours of sunlight every day, the Vestfold Hills often

pack loaded with tools and survival gear, my boots tended to take a pounding. Walking in this area is reminiscent of walking on a boulder-strewn seashore platform in Australia. I was continually amazed by the topography—glacial lakes seemed to be scattered over the landscape haphazardly like puddles in a giant's sandpit. In Antarctica there has been no erosion of valleys by the movement of water. Instead, the ground was carved by glaciers; when the glaciers retreated the rocks simply remained where they were, to be attacked by the powerful Antarctic winds. Since the wind generally comes from one direction, rocks tend to be wind-scoured on one side, which has sometimes resulted in intricate patterns. The wind can be fierce, picking up dust and grit and sandblasting anything in its way and rocks slowly fall apart where they stand. Working outside on a windy day I found that dust and grit penetrated my clothes; grit settled between my teeth and lips—it worked its way into everything.

The weather in the Vestfold Hills is usually mild and stable. Although extremes

amount of snow falling annually is equivalent to just 50 millimetres of rainfall. Despite the low precipitation, Antarctica contains most of the world's fresh water, accumulated as ice. The crisp, dry air is so incredibly clear that it is possible to see clouds peeking over the horizon from many kilometres away. The dry air causes you to dehydrate very quickly and I often woke up with a very hoarse and dry throat. However, the dry conditions did have the



'Are you listening to me?' Young, male elephant seals. **Near right**, Watts Lake and Watts Hut, Vestfold Hills. **Far right**, penguin cruise liner.

experience brilliant days with clear, blue skies. In the continuously bright conditions I found myself restless. My body clock seemed unable to cope even with routine 'nine-to-five' hours and I was often fatigued. I would sleep for much longer than usual. Walking seemed the obvious way to compensate for this.

The topography of the Vestfold Hills is somewhat like that of a moonscape or rocky desert. The ground is stony and hard, too rugged to allow vehicle access (which is also discouraged because of the risk of permanently scarring the landscape). The alternative is to walk, an ideal way to see the Vestfold Hills. Since I mostly carried a

can occur the climate is generally benign (at least for Antarctica) and the locals have nicknamed the area around Davis 'The Riviera of the South'. The mean temperature ranges from 2.9°C in January to -20.4°C in August. The recorded extremes are +13°C and -40°C. Snowfall is only 78 millimetres a year—the skiing is not much good here! Any snow that does fall usually doesn't last long but sublimates away, so there is no water or Tasmanian-style mud to hamper the 'bushwalker'. However, violent blizzards worse than any that strike the South-west can blow up at any time of the year.

Antarctica experiences gales that reach hurricane force for days at a time, caused by katabatic winds—essentially huge masses of cold air flowing down from the heights around the Pole under the influence of gravity. Antarctica's plateau is the world's largest and driest desert. In the centre the

bonus that it was unnecessary to carry waterproof and breathable fabrics such as Gore-Tex. As a die-hard gear freak I found it difficult to leave my breathable clothing at home in favour of the windproof, ventile clothing supplied to us by the Antarctic Division, which worked exceptionally well.

Despite Antarctica's reputation for extremes, walking during summer was relatively safe. Survival gear such as a sleeping-bag, bivy-bag and a radio could be carried comfortably in a rucksack, enabling wide scope for walking. To bivy out was a viable and usually quite comfortable option. It was important to travel in pairs in case of an emergency. Twenty-four hours of daylight combined with minimal snow made walking easy. A refuge hut stocked with food is never more than four hours' walk from any part of the Vestfolds. Navigation is also relatively easy with lakes and hills providing prominent landmarks although things sometimes became a bit tricky in the monotonous topography. When conditions allowed, it

was pleasant to walk on frozen lakes or fjords which formed smooth, polished highways. During winter the ice can be more than 1.5 metres thick and support even the heaviest vehicles. Travel by sea-ice gives access to most parts of the Vestfold Hills. However, during summer the fjords and lakes tend to melt making this kind of travel impractical and dangerous. Walking gave me a good opportunity to get away from the grubby confines of station life to

animals that require ice-free ground for part of the year use the Vestfolds as a nesting site during summer. Adelie penguins have established rookeries in some parts of the hills. Wilson's storm petrels, snow petrels, Antarctic skuas, and giant petrels all nest in various parts of the Vestfold Hills. Juvenile male elephant seals have 'haul-out' sites in which they wallow during summer. Weddell seals haul out near holes in the sea-ice. Most Antarctic wildlife has not

does not set—and the horizon seems the essence of infinity. Returning to Tasmania after spending a summer 'south' the dichotomy was startling. Seeing, smelling and hearing the hustle and bustle of Hobart, surrounded by green hills and cluttered by trees, plants, insects and other life provided a moving contrast to the silence and emptiness of the place where I had just been. Only two continents lie entirely within the Southern hemisphere; Australia and Antarctica. Travelling from one to the other was like entering a different world. The colours in the Antarctic seemed so pale compared with the green of Tasmania.

I find it hard to talk to people about my experiences in Antarctica. Trying to describe them accurately without resorting to 'The Great White Hell' clichés is difficult. Did I find life tough? Well, yes and no. The problems we encountered were usually not a product of our physical environment but 'people problems' we had brought with us from Australia. As a physically active person the sedentary lifestyle of an Antarctic station was a bit of a shock to the system. Keeping myself occupied was as much of a challenge as the environment itself. In doing so I discovered the unique attractions of



the silence and tranquillity of the hills. Sometimes I would just sit and watch the sun late in the evening. When low on the horizon it would provide a kaleidoscope of colour as it crawled towards the sea only to halt its descent and begin to rise again a few hours later. The sight of sunlit cloud in the pristine, clear sky is a memory of Antarctica that I shall always carry with me. By walking I was able to see parts of the Vestfold Hills to which my work did not take me. The comfortable field huts dotted through the area, each containing beds, a heater and a stove, were our main form of accommodation. Because of their round, red appearance they are known affectionately as 'apples'; their larger counterparts are called 'melons'. These huts enabled me and my fellow scientists to stay in the field for extended periods, returning to the station from time to time to phone home and to wash.

The Vestfold Hills are an oasis in Antarctica. While almost all life in the Antarctic relies on the sea for sustenance,

come into contact with humans before and so in general does not perceive humans to be a threat; consequently animals sometimes wander right up to you. It could be difficult to tell who was looking at whom. It gave me a warm inner glow to see an Adelie penguin waddle up to me seemingly inquisitive and clown-like, only to wander away again. It was, however, a bit intimidating to find an Antarctic skua swooping down on me fearlessly and in full cry because I had probably been too close to a nearby nest.

To me Antarctica seemed a land indifferent to human needs—a cold, windy, isolated, almost sterile place. It is characterised not by what it contains but rather by what it lacks. You are surrounded by crisp, clean air; no smells; no sounds; no stimuli. On a calm, windless day you can hear only the creak of your body and the pounding of your heart. You look upwards into a dome of sky containing a sun that



walking in a land where so few people have walked before. It does not have the living glories of the Queensland rainforest or Tasmania's high moors in autumn to entice the Australian bushwalker. Instead, it offers the chance to visit a place of stark beauty unlike any other on earth. 📍

Jim Daniels at present lives and studies in the South Island, New Zealand. He enjoys tramping, mountain biking and Telemarking in New Zealand's Southern Alps. Jim briefly returned to Antarctica last January.

River of GOLD

Guy Reeve encounters more than the usual white-water hazards on a trip down the Shoalhaven River

Something suddenly felt dreadfully wrong. The feeling was indefinable, barely perceptible. The overbearing noise of the water crashing down the fall and Nick's worried expression as he fitted his spray-deck to his kayak in an eddy above it accented my unease.

I couldn't place it. One moment I had felt fine, standing on a rock inspecting the small waterfall for a runnable route. Seconds later I had stumbled as I hopped from one wet rock to another and all of a sudden had been gripped by this uneasy feeling. What was it? On past kayaking trips I had experienced similar premonitions shortly before moments of danger on the river. I scrutinised Nick's planned route for dangers that we might previously have missed.

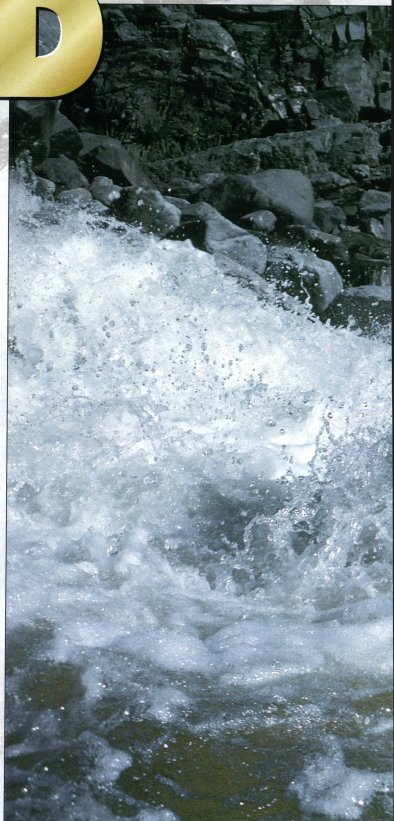
I glanced at my wrist and then it dawned on me. My watch was missing. I swore. It was a good watch, a Seiko. I had worn it constantly for 12 years. It had been a companion throughout all my previous adventures in a kayak as well as on the other trials and tribulations of life.

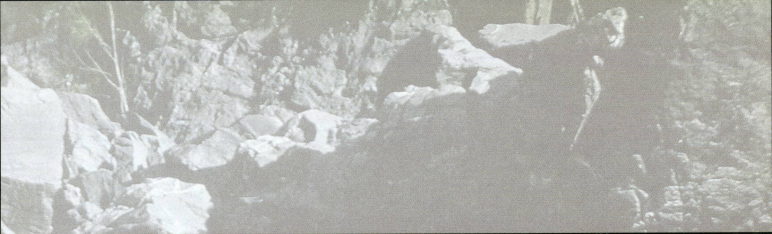
I hurriedly scanned the surrounding rocks—but in vain. They were all rounded strata. I could not see an obvious spot where my watch might have come to rest. Probably the strap had broken further upstream while we were paddling down towards the fall. I retraced my steps to my beached kayak, and then back to where I had stumbled. Nothing. I knelt down on the rock I had last stood on and thrust my hands into the water at the edge of the fall in the vain hope that it might have been caught like some of the rounded pebbles rattling through my probing fingers.

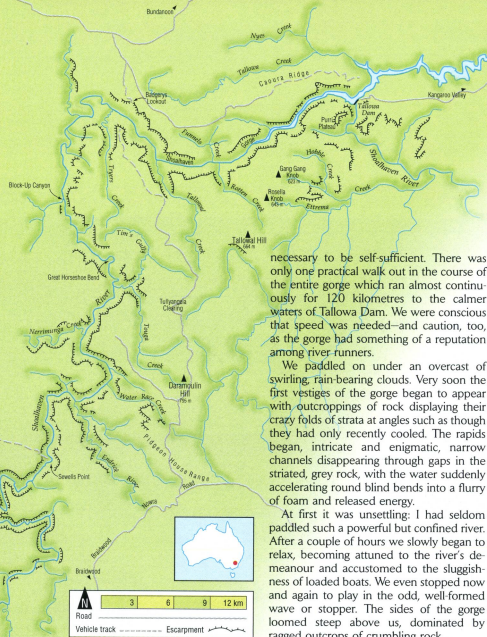
A shout from the river, barely audible above the thundering water but its meaning was clear: get on with it! This was New South Wales's Shoalhaven River, and we had come less than a kilometre from our put-in point. There were still over a hundred kilometres of wild water to go and only a few days in which to paddle it.

I swore again, and hurried back to my boat, jumped in, clipped on the spray-deck and pushed out into the main current. The lip of the fall was only metres away. My companions were sitting in their boats below the fall and I was unable to see even the tops of their helmets. For a moment I could not remember which of two lines I had decided on. Suddenly it came to me, a couple of frantic paddle strokes and I was powering off the lip of the fall at an angle in an attempt to miss the boiling recirculation directly beneath.

'Jet propulsion' for Andrew Smith at the bottom of a Shoalhaven rapid. All photos Guy Reeve







the lip of the fall and the moment of descent wiped away all fear as the mind was overwhelmed by gravity and water until huge grins and shouts of triumph when the paddler emerged intact below.

This was frequently delayed by regular back loops; the weight of gear in the stern of the boats accentuated the recirculating effect of the powerful hydraulics at the bottom of the drops. These made the stern sink and the bow rear skyward, occasionally toppling over backwards in a disorientating mélange of sky, water and rock.

By midday we were pretty well exhausted by the cycle of accumulated tension, climax, and release of adrenalin. Each fall we reached compounded the apprehension we felt and the cumulative effect was such that we decided lunch was well overdue.

A pristine sandbank beckoned and we sprawled gear and bodies over the hot sand. The warmth of the sun on skin stripped of its protective clothing was a powerful tonic and soon we began to relax again. We shared a ripe melon I had stuffed into the back of my boat, both to slake our thirst and to reduce some of the weight in the stern.

All too soon it was time to press on: we had to cover a reasonable distance to set ourselves up for the next two or three days. Time was a precious commodity among the group—four days were the absolute maximum most of us could afford and if conditions allowed we hoped to crack it in three.

It wasn't long before we came to a fall that required inspection: a large cascade of water over tilted steps of strata. I scrambled up to a vantage point on the right bank with Frank while the others eddied out on the left of the river. There was a reasonable route and Nick and Stewie were the first back into their boats to run it.

Suddenly, as Stewie was lining up for the fall, there was a loud report, unmistakably a gunshot. This came as something of a surprise given the remoteness of the location and the rugged country, and at first I thought it might have been the crack of a falling rock breaking away. A second and a third shot confirmed the initial assessment. This time the crack of the bullet passing through the air above our heads, followed a moment later by the thump of the explosion of the cartridge in the breach of the weapon, was undeniable evidence of high-velocity rounds coming our way.

We scanned the rim of the gorge for the unseen gunman. A couple of scenes from the film *Deliverance* flashed through my mind. More shots followed but I could not see any dust or rock being raised near us. Sudden movement on the far side of the gorge caught my eye and with some relief I recognised it as a flock of goats being terrorised by the fusillade. They were the targets—not we.

Nick Boylan paddling a tricky fall in the Shalhaven Gorge, upstream from Yellow Spring Creek.

necessary to be self-sufficient. There was only one practical walk out in the course of the entire gorge which ran almost continuously for 120 kilometres to the calmer waters of Tallowa Dam. We were conscious that speed was needed—and caution, too, as the gorge had something of a reputation among river-runners.

We paddled on under an overcast of swirling, rain-bearing clouds. Very soon the first vestiges of the gorge began to appear with outcroppings of rock displaying their crazy folds of strata at angles such as though they had only recently cooled. The rapids began, intricate and enigmatic, narrow channels disappearing through gaps in the striated, grey rock, with the water suddenly accelerating round blind bends into a flurry of foam and released energy.

At first it was unsettling: I had seldom paddled such a powerful but confined river. After a couple of hours we slowly began to relax, becoming attuned to the river's demeanour and accustomed to the sluggishness of loaded boats. We even stopped now and again to play in the odd, well-formed wave or stopper. The sides of the gorge loomed steep above us, dominated by ragged outcrops of crumbling rock.

Here and there flocks of feral goats scrambled upwards, disturbed by our sudden but silent appearance. Their rank smell drifting across the river was the only invisible testimony to their impact on the landscape: the effects of their hoofs and teeth on vegetation and soil were noticeable everywhere.

We rounded a hairpin bend where high-tension power lines spanned the river, with pylons draped in damp cloud. These marked the start of the steepest section of river, which continued for another 25 kilometres. Almost immediately the river seemed to fall away, disappearing downhill into a maze of boulders and channels.

Most rapids we paddled on sight, hopping from eddy to eddy to check out a route between visible stopping-places. Frequently the bottom of a rapid could not be seen and we would scramble out on to rocks to spot the route down.

Falls and rapids, rapids and falls: time seemed to disappear in our cautious progress down the river. At each difficult fall, the adrenalin would start to pump, slowly at first as we got out to inspect but faster as we re-entered the boat and pushed out into the current. The rush climaxed at

A plunging drop, a faceful of water, and it was over. I paddled on to catch up with the others, who were already heading downstream.

The countryside was beginning to close in and steeper, the first hint of the gorge to come. On the map it looked sensational: the contours stacked up on top of each other to make a great ribbon of brown that snaked its way across an otherwise relatively bare map sheet. The rate of descent of the river also presaged interesting kayaking with a peak of over 30 metres a kilometre in some stretches.

Several weeks of loose planning and discussions had culminated in a week of rain. Nick's information on the water-level had looked promising on Thursday and on Friday Andy, Frank and Stewie had positioned two cars at Tallowa Dam in preparation for the long weekend. We counted on needing about four days given the seriousness of the upper gorge section and the slow progress we anticipated during the first 35 kilometres of difficult, wild water.

So here we were, paddling boats crammed to the gunwales with four days' worth of food and all the other gear



The fall itself and more difficult rapids below it temporarily banished the incident from our minds as we followed the river deeper into the landscape. By early evening we were shattered both physically and mentally and we pulled up to a great campsite on a sheltered sandbank. Fish swam up to eat the scrapings from our billys as we scrubbed them at the water's edge and we fell asleep to the prolonged bleating of a goat apparently stuck high up on the far wall of the gorge. Late at night I woke with a start to the rumbling crash of a rockfall on the other side of the river, followed by an eerie silence: it seems that some goats cause more erosion than others.

The intensity and difficulty of the river continued unabated the next morning and included two portages round substantial falls. Next to the second fall we found an

the ominously named Skull Island was just round the corner. As we reached the island I noticed an inflated toy dinghy trapped in some trees on its upstream edge. And I was still contemplating its origin when unexpected movement further downstream caught my eye.

We saw two figures on the right bank, and as we drifted closer we heard the noise of a generator. Two men, one dressed in a wet suit with a diver's weight belt, mask, and snorkel—the other in shorts, were trying to manoeuvre twin pontoons on which was mounted a large, petrol-driven pump. Unbelievable! Here we were paddling what we thought was a reasonably remote river through National Park, only to find an engine chugging away at the heart of it!

I greeted them as I drifted into the eddy below the outcrop of rock on which they were perched. They seemed as surprised to see us as we were to see them. They were messing about with what

Leaving the optimistic pair behind we negotiated the last few rapids down to Sewells Point. The carry out up a barely visible goat track to the rim of the gorge looked horrific and for the time being we were glad that we had chosen to continue to Tallowa Dam. The next 80 kilometres of gorge were similarly spectacular though the rapids became fewer and further between and were easy in comparison with those of the upper reaches. The flat stretches became longer and longer and the kilometres dragged by more and more slowly as we pushed on down trying to finish before the long weekend was over. Under the spell of the beauty that surrounded us we continued paddling like automata, heads bowed under the sun, driven only by the thought of a stop for a muesli bar every two hours.

A day and a half later, sipping warm beer and nursing cramped feet, aching muscles and blistered hands in the car park at the dam, we all wondered whether the climb at Sewells Point might not have been a better idea. After all, if two gamblers could lug all



abandoned kayak with a small hole in the hull and wondered about the fate of the occupant: had he or she tried to shoot the fall? And what had the walk out been like? Looking up at the gorge walls I was unable to pick out any sign of a way up.

The psychology of our group began to take an interesting turn, with various paddlers shooting and portaging different falls depending on what they thought and how they felt about them. Acrobatics were by now a common feature at the bottom of most drops and an informal competition evolved to see who could regain control in the most stylish manner.

A quick check of the map showed us to be still some way above the only real intermediate access at Sewells Point, and

looked like six metres of suction hose attached to the pump. Intrigued as to how they had got their gear down here I struck up a casual conversation, asking whether they had found much gold and what route they had taken into the gorge.

They were reticent, if not actually hostile, admitting to little success and I soon gave it away and headed off downstream after the others. They must have been confident of at least some reward to have manhandled about a tonne of pump, fuel, pontoons, and other assorted gear down into the gorge. The gold-rush spirit of the old pioneering days was not yet dead.

Shooting a typical fall in the upper Shoalhaven Gorge.

their gear into and out of the Shoalhaven Gorge in a vain search for treasure, we—who had revelled in the natural riches of this magnificent river—could surely have done the same. 🍷

Guy Reeve has paddled wild rivers in Europe, Africa, South America and Australia on and off for 15 years. His most enjoyable and challenging expedition was a first kayak descent of the Zambezi from Victoria Falls to Lake Kariba in Zimbabwe.

STOPPING TO SMELL THE

flowers

Maureen Kleeman, Judy Richmond and Jan Ward recount the joys and discoveries of five bushwalking women



I don't think I can get out', came Maureen's cry from the snow-drift where she lay half buried. She had tumbled again on her snowshoes and fallen backwards down the slope. Her rucksack was out of sight, the ungainly snowshoes strapped to her feet waved upright in the frosty air.

Judy and I manoeuvred our rucksacks off again and positioned ourselves on either side of her, slapping the snow flat with our snowshoes to stabilise ourselves.

This was not the first time we had hauled each other upright after falling on the sloping sides of the valley. The heaviest snowfalls for five years had lured us into the mountains to snowshoe along the course of the Guthega River for our first try at snow-camping.

The heavy rucksacks made our progress slow and ponderous but the beauty and silence of this white wilderness was captivating and we stopped frequently to absorb it.

The only marks on the deep snow were our own, characteristic footprints and the



Treating Helen's blisters, the Pilot walk, New South Wales, 1993; Jan, left, Doris, Judy and Helen. *Maureen Kleeman. Top, Francine Gilledder on Mt Twynham, Snowy Mountains, NSW. Title photo, flowers and berries on Watsons Crag, Snowy Mountains. Chris Baxter*

tracks of tiny rodents and birds. The sun, when it came out between the heavy clouds, created fantastic shadow patterns from the trees on the snow.



The night before we had shovelled a platform in the snow and walked round and round it in our snowshoes till it was flat enough and hard enough for our tent. We had even thought that we were showing great foresight by trekking down to a spot where the river was accessible between its frozen banks to fill up the water-bucket and -bottles so that we would be able to have our morning cuppa in the tent without venturing out. The Trangia was set up in the front vestibule of the tent, ready to go.

However, one thing we had overlooked was that the temperature would drop below freezing point overnight. Our water was solid ice by morning and we had to replenish our supplies by scooping up freshly fallen snow. It was a cosy, indulgent morning in the tunnel tent, with us encased in our down bags chatting and laughing while we drank

yet another cup of tea, with the Trangia sinking deeper into the snowy hole its heat had created.

It was September 1992 and a few years earlier this expedition to try something new and challenging would not have seemed possible to us.

We are a group of five women; three of us are 50 years old and

Sue Baxter, left, and Carolyn Woolford making light work of Quartz Ridge, Mt Bogong, Victoria. Chris Baxter, **Right**, heavier going on the Loddon Plains, Frenchmans Cap area, Tasmania. Stephen Curtain

the two young ones are thirty-nine. We have different levels of fitness and have found ways to organise our lives that make it possible to leave husbands and adolescent kids to 'go bush' together several times each year. We all subscribe to the philosophy of *carpe deum* ('seize the day').

At Guthega River we laughed as we remembered the early days of lugging rucksacks filled with books, bricks and potting mix up hills and around ovals on our early-morning training walks. Gradually, over the weeks, the rucksacks felt lighter as our shoulder muscles strengthened. We had even heard of people preparing for bush-walks by doing the vacuuming with heavy rucksacks strapped to their backs but we stuck to our early-morning jaunts.

Our group size varies from three to five women. Five is our maximum number because of constraints of transportation, limited group gear and impact on the environment. We all share a love of the bush and had camped with our families many times in the past when the vast pile of gear that seemed necessary for such trips was carried in the boot of the car.



come back for more. The beauty of the mountains—and the knowledge that we carried on our backs all we needed to survive—lured us on and gave us the confidence to try it on our own without the professional back-up we had previously enjoyed.

We undertook our first trip in January 1992. The one in our group who most enjoys the challenges of map reading and researching new adventures is 50-year-old Jan. She is a keen photographer, painter and art teacher and the photo albums she puts together at the end of each walk are greatly admired and treasured. She cuts and makes collages from the photos, seeking out colour and design from nature to transform into sometimes abstract patterns; and she adds poetry and comment to the pages in fine calligraphy.

After talking with bushwalking friends and studying maps Jan planned our first walk along fire tracks to include the

Jagungal wilderness area of the Kosciuszko National Park. The route went from Round Mountain in the north to the Guthega Power Station in the south. We allowed ourselves plenty of time—six days and nights out and only 75 kilometres to cover. This would give us a rest-day if we needed it or time to do side-trips should we feel adventurous.

Although our previous organised trips had provided excellent training, to embark on a six-day walk independently without back-up and to be totally self-reliant was quite a daunting prospect for some of us.

Maureen, 39, is the deliber-ator/worrier in our group. She is a compassionate educator who gives her all to her students. Maureen is passionately devoted to literature and is the source of much wisdom on the track. She had been convinced that she would not survive her first organised trip when storms struck on her first night out. She is terrified of

thunder and lightning and has always felt very distressed at high altitude. For her, 'what if this should happen?' loomed large. We were all well aware that the Kosciuszko National Park could turn on a blizzard in a couple of hours even in the middle of summer.

However, our first adventure was a great success. We followed the maps without any trouble, the weather was stunning and we emerged at Guthega confident and happy, with improved fitness and determined to keep it up. Maureen's growing confidence had allowed her to join us in scrambling up the granite boulders to the summits of Mt Jagungal and Gungartang and she was justifiably exhilarated by her efforts!

Our preparation for this first trip had been thorough. Reading on the subject indicated that the ideal weight to carry should be a quarter of one's body weight. As well as getting used to carrying the rucksacks we experimented with a wide range of dehydrated foods. Judy, 50, is the 'foodie' of our group and she always manages to extract new recipes from bushwalkers we meet along the track. She has a wry sense of humour and happily wanders over to other camp-fires (when cooking is in progress) with some treat on offer but we know that she is ever inquisitive, checking out the mixture in the cooking pot! She usually comes back with yet more interesting culinary delights scribbled in her notebook.

On our Nadgee Nature Reserve walk in January 1994 Judy earnestly swapped food secrets and water sources with a couple who had just walked in from Mallaacoota. She learnt of the wonders of polenta, soya grits, burghul and Romano cheese. Judy has even been known to set up the Trangia in the art room of the school and at lunch-time one day she experimented with a proposed bushwalking meal—a concoction of dried fish, dehydrated vegetables and black, Chinese fungus. Organising for early trips, Judy used spreadsheets to detail menus and weights. We now feel more relaxed and plan the food more casually. Lunches and dinners are taken on a group basis while breakfasts are carried individually to reflect personal preferences.

Each group meal is separately packed in a freezer bag and marked clearly ('Day 3—dinner', for example) with all excess packaging removed. Quantities are carefully measured and seasonings added at home so that meals become a one-pot mix as far as possible. Our philosophy: 'just add water'. The challenge is to prepare a tasty and hearty group meal weighing less than 500 grams.

We have had some stunning successes on the Trangia—miso soup concentrate with dried bean curd and dried mushrooms, served with Japanese potato noodles, had a total weight of less than 200 grams and fed five people. It was delicious! The meal was created by Helen, influenced by her Japanese mother. Helen, 39, is a calm and caring mother of three young children. She teaches Japanese full time and her husband runs his own business. Her life is crowded and very busy. She treasures the sense of freedom on our walks with only herself to care for and the physical challenges of the hill climbs to consider. Often her short legs make it hard going when we decide to leave the track and go cross-country through the alpine scrub on compass bearings, which we now have the confidence to do.

Through experience we have learnt to carry only what we need. Over the years we have acquired our own lightweight gear (helped along with birthday- and Christmas presents). We have given away the early indulgences such as pre-dinner smoked salmon and capers on pumpernickel bread!

Ironically, our chance to try long-distance bushwalking with rucksacks had come through our jobs. Every year the secondary school where we all work sends 150 students out into the high terrain of the Kosciuszko National Park for a programme organised by Outward Bound Australia. Each group of 20 students is assigned one instructor and one teacher and the group works as a self-sufficient unit through a ten-day adventure of bushwalking, caving, abseiling and canoeing. The only shelter at night is a sheet of plastic fashioned into a bivvy with eight short lengths of cord. The programme continues despite any snow, sleet, rain or hail the High Country can turn on.

We had all participated in one or more of these adventures and were encouraged to

However, we still carry a small, plastic container of home-made cumquats in brandy to finish off the evening meal. As yet freeze-dried champagne has not been marketed in Australia so we make do with powdered orange juice and drink lots of water purified with tablets or iodine.

We have found TVP (textured vegetable protein) to be a useful meal base and have developed numerous creative ways to use it including in taco and curry sauces. One young walker we met in the Budawang in southern New South Wales was most impressed when he learnt that we were carrying TVP for dinner. We were very surprised at his response of, 'How are you going to cook it without a microwave?' until we realised that he thought we were planning to eat TV dinners!

The preferences of bushwalkers for gear to take into the bush vary greatly. On one of our walks—from Dead Horse Gap near Thredbo to Suggan Buggan in Victoria—we met an older man pulling a laden golf buggy full of gear for his time out in the High Country.

On another occasion we decided to take shelter from the heavy rains in a mountain hut and met a lone walker from Adelaide, who had been lugging a 38 kilogram rucksack—including a canvas bag full of food slung across his shoulder—for his annual three-week hut-hopping holiday in the Kosciuszko National Park. He had eaten his evening meal and was obviously craving company; he talked to us for an hour without a break. We were wet and hungry and desperate for some peace so, when he finally stopped to draw breath, we told him we were on retreat and that at 6 pm we observed an hour's quiet time! We were thankful when he collected his food and returned to his tent. We prepared our meal amid stifled giggles and a poor attempt at observing our 'quiet' routine.

In fact, humour is ever-present on our trips; both in situations in which we find ourselves and when reflecting on interesting and sometimes eccentric characters we meet on our travels. One couple, primary teachers from Albury, arrived at our camp beside the Tumut River at the base of Mt Jagungal extremely exhausted and exasperated after their 18 kilometre walk in from Round Mountain. After many years of car camping this was their first bushwalk with full rucksacks. In order to lighten their loads they had even considered throwing away the map!

Another couple, a Californian rockclimber and his Japanese partner whom we met on the summit of Mt Jagungal, had been driven to such a frenzy by the local March flies that they were shortening their stay in Australia and were beating a hasty retreat to Sydney airport and zones overseas free of March flies.

Our time together in the bush provides a stark contrast to the challenges of combining very busy jobs with the demands of contemporary family life.

These extended walks provide an opportunity for us to relax and enjoy each others' company.

Discussions are wide-ranging and unpredictable and laughter is abundant. We thrive on this time for reflection, mutual support along the track, developing our navigational skills and gaining confidence in our own abilities.

We are not constrained by time factors or the urge to smell the flowers and enjoy the view. Our pace is slower and governed exclusively by the group's needs. For the duration of these walks we have only ourselves to worry about.

Others have obviously found similar enjoyment in taking time out from their lives. Like the two sisters we met who came from cities far apart in Australia, sunning themselves on a rocky river bank near Valentines Hut; they were in the bush for a week of catching up with each other's lives.



What a laugh! Sue Baxter, midstream, and Ros Murphy trying to keep their feet dry when crossing the Tooma River, Mt Jagungal area, New South Wales. *Chris Baxter. Right, Jan, left, and Judy return to their snowy tent at dusk. Guthega River valley snowshoe walk, 1992. Kleeman*

Our knowledge of the areas through which we have travelled has grown over the years by yarning with friends and other walkers. Around the fire one night in the cosy Grey Mare Hut we chatted for hours with a keen runner and musician in his 50s who had travelled 7000 kilometres on foot in the Kosciuszko National Park over the past 12 years. He was a font of knowledge about the tracks, huts and mountain folk of the park.

At Oldfields Hut in the northern end of the Kosciuszko National Park late one afternoon three old-timers arrived on horseback with their pack-mules and entertained us with stories of their journeys. Dinner for them that night was to be pancakes and apricots. The batter had bubbled away all day in its container in a saddle-bag, fired along with the yeast from a can of beer mixed in to make the pancakes rise. The pancakes were to be washed down with Scotch whisky recently dug up from a food cache.

Over the years we have sought occasional refuge in mountain huts when the weather has been particularly bad. We appreciate the efforts made by volunteer groups and clubs and the Kosciuszko Huts Association, who spend much time and effort in maintaining these huts.

On the track much enjoyment has been derived from reading logbooks in huts and on mountain summits. On one trip, the Mt Pilot logbook had a lyrical entry from the FARTS from Melbourne who had reached

map, identifying water sources and significant local features—even down to marking one point 'Bird on Rock'. To our amazement, there it was—bird on rock!—when we approached this site two days later. This was obviously the cormorant's favourite viewing platform.

One aspect of our experiences together has been the enjoyment of the full 24-hour day. The rhythms of the bush are keenly anticipated and appreciated. Pre-dawn birdsong, stunning sunrises, becoming aware of the feeding and drinking habits of the local fauna—all contribute to setting up rhythms of a daily life very different from our 'other' existence. Wild flowers along the track have provided rewards for hard climbs, for negotiating difficult terrains, for exhorting ourselves from boggy patches and for completing sometimes treacherous river-crossings. At no time have we felt afraid on our walks.

By dusk our camp-site has been established and the evening meal devoured. We have then been able to enjoy the night sky, wildlife feeding and other bush sounds. Once at Tin Mine Camp we were awakened at 2 am by the thundering of brumby hoofs through the eucalypts. We crawled out of our sleeping-bags to watch these magnificent horses snorting and prancing under the full moon.

bination of her heavy rucksack and the fierce heat of an Australian summer had made Doris think in the first hours of this walk that she would not make the distance. Within two days she was suffering anxiety headaches so we had a rest-day at Tin Mine Hut while three of the party did a day walk to the Pilot.

Doris and Maureen rested in the shade of the huge, old gums all day enjoying the peaceful valley views and watching brumbies grazing beside the Ingeegoodbee River.

The moonlight visit of the brumbies totally captivated Doris and convinced her that such sights were only for those who ventured out into the more remote regions of the country. She was hooked!

Doris's strength and confidence grows with each walk. In September 1993 she walked for over 100 kilometres with us through the Flinders Ranges in South Australia—with their stark beauty, heat and lack of water. Doris keeps us entertained with her humour and her quaint expressions and she particularly likes to pamper our aching bodies with body creams and lotions she carries in tiny, plastic containers and film canisters.

Such are our comforts that we want for nothing on these trips. Our collapsible, plastic water-bucket, Trangia saucapans and water-bladders allow us to collect ample water for ablutions every evening.

Our silk sheets, down sleeping-bags, sleeping-mats and tunnel tent create a cosy haven for tired bodies and there is always plentiful chat. Headtorches allow us to read before going to sleep.

We have all come to appreciate and enjoy the isolation of these walks and have often spent up to three days without seeing other people.

With careful planning, physical preparation and plain common sense it is possible for everyone—regardless of commitments—to experience the joys of an extended bushwalk in remote regions. When the pressures of our lives begin to wear us down we are encouraged by the words of Dot Butler in *The Barefoot Bushwalker* (1991):

...one day we will find urgent fingers rapping at the mind and we must leave our shores and go whither the stranger beckons—back to the high hills, the hard life, the effort and the striving, and the merry companions, all of which stir the soul to a depth and tenderness past the power of words to describe. ■

Maureen Kleeman is aged 39 and is the mother of a 20-year-old. A teacher of resources, English and maths, she enjoys bushwalking with family and friends.

Judy Richmond is also 50 years old and has two teenage children. She teaches business studies and legal studies. Her outdoors activities include many bushwalks, mountain biking, skiing and snowshoeing trips. Judy is about to embark on three months of travelling in Peru, the Polish High Tatras, Norway and Cornwall.

Jan Ward is 50 years old, is married and has two children. She is an art teacher, artist, photographer and keen, skilled bushwalker. Her 1995 overseas travels with her husband included a three-month walking tour through Canada, Austria, Norway and the UK.



the peak the day before us. This group of men, who formed the Fraternity of Amiable Rambling as a Therapeutic Science, was heading in the opposite direction to us and we regretted not having met them. We have followed groups on many walks and have had great fun reading of their exploits, particularly those of one family with four small children walking the mountains at Christmas time. They hung their stockings from the mantelpiece of the fireplace at Grey Mare Hut and reported in the log, with great delight, that Santa had visited.

Much useful advice is conveyed through these logs, such as the whereabouts of resident snakes and warnings about packing and food-devouring rats in the roof.

The bushwalkers' creed also facilitates a generous sharing of track information, camp-sites and sources of water. At Newtons Beach the walker who shared food tips with Judy kindly annotated our



The stars were brilliant and as she stood in the moonlight watching these wild and beautiful creatures, a turning-point occurred for Doris, aged 50, the fifth member of our group. We were on a walk through the Pilot wilderness into the Victorian Alps and she had been finding the going very tough. Doris is a small, lightly built woman from Germany, who had then been in Australia for only five years. This was her first experience of the Australian bush. Her mother, who had died when Doris was 35, had spent much of her time walking in the Austrian Alps. Doris, too, had been a keen walker and skier in her youth. This bushwalking trip presented an opportunity for her to 'complete the circle' by following in her mother's footsteps. However, the com-

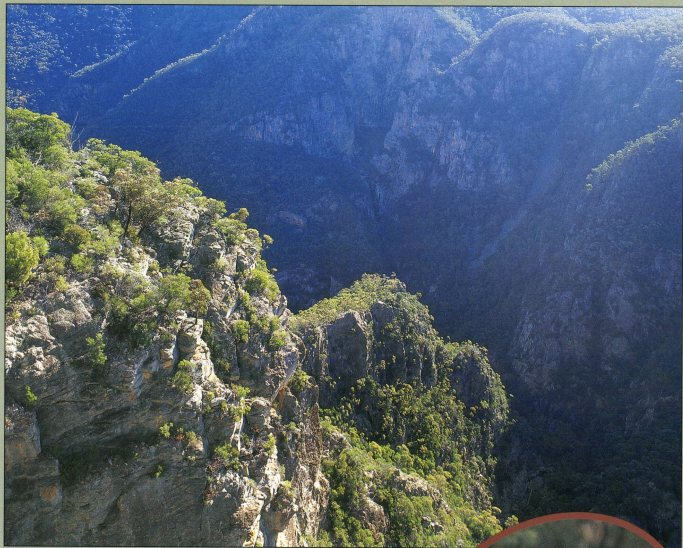
By lake and gorge

Trees and water, by *Bette Devine*



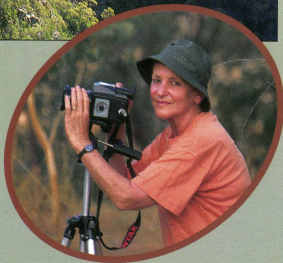
Mountain gum
bark detail. **Right**,
Myall Lakes, New
South Wales.





Little River Gorge,
East Gippsland, Victoria.

Bette Devine left teaching three years ago to become a full-time photographer and to explore Australia—especially National Parks. She regards photography as a contemplation of the natural world—and therefore a solitary but never lonely experience. It is her greatest happiness to wander through the bush with her camera in her pack. Her pictures go to a photo library, conservation organisations, calendar companies and other publishers.



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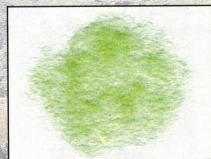
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Mt Loch ski tours

Day-trips and XCD runs near Mt Hotham, by *Michael Hampton*

adventurous skiers of both the cross-country and downhill varieties have long been drawn to the Mt Hotham area. Unlike the undulating Bogong High Plains further north, most of the best touring areas adjacent to Hotham are over and around a series of interlocking ridges and valleys. The Mt Loch area in particular has the perfect mix of terrain—exposed ridges and open slopes, undulating plateaux and sheltered bowls—and straightforward (if somewhat exposed) access. In fine weather the views toward Mts Feathertop and Fainter are simply magnificent.

Mt Loch itself, like many peaks on the adjacent high plains, is the worn-out

remnant of a columnar basalt knoll. What it lacks in steepness is compensated for by the relatively easy climb to the summit. For cross-country skiers of an intermediate standard who are getting into snow-camping, practising snowcraft, linking their first Telemark turns, or simply starting to discover the High Country in winter, the surrounding plateau and spurs provide the perfect playground. There is also much to amuse even the most jaded XCD nut or back-country skater. What follows is just a sample to whet the appetite.

● Map

Feathertop 1:25 000 Vicmap.

● Access

Take the Ovens Valley Highway to Harrietteville. Continue on the Alpine Road to Mt Hotham passing through the Alpine Resorts Commission entry gate near Mt St Bernard (an entry fee is payable). The Mt Loch car park is on the left as you come over the exposed shoulder before entering the Mt Hotham village. If you do not wish to leave your car here overnight you can always park in the village and catch the shuttle bus back to the Mt Loch car park. The pole line starts north of the car park.

DAY TOURS

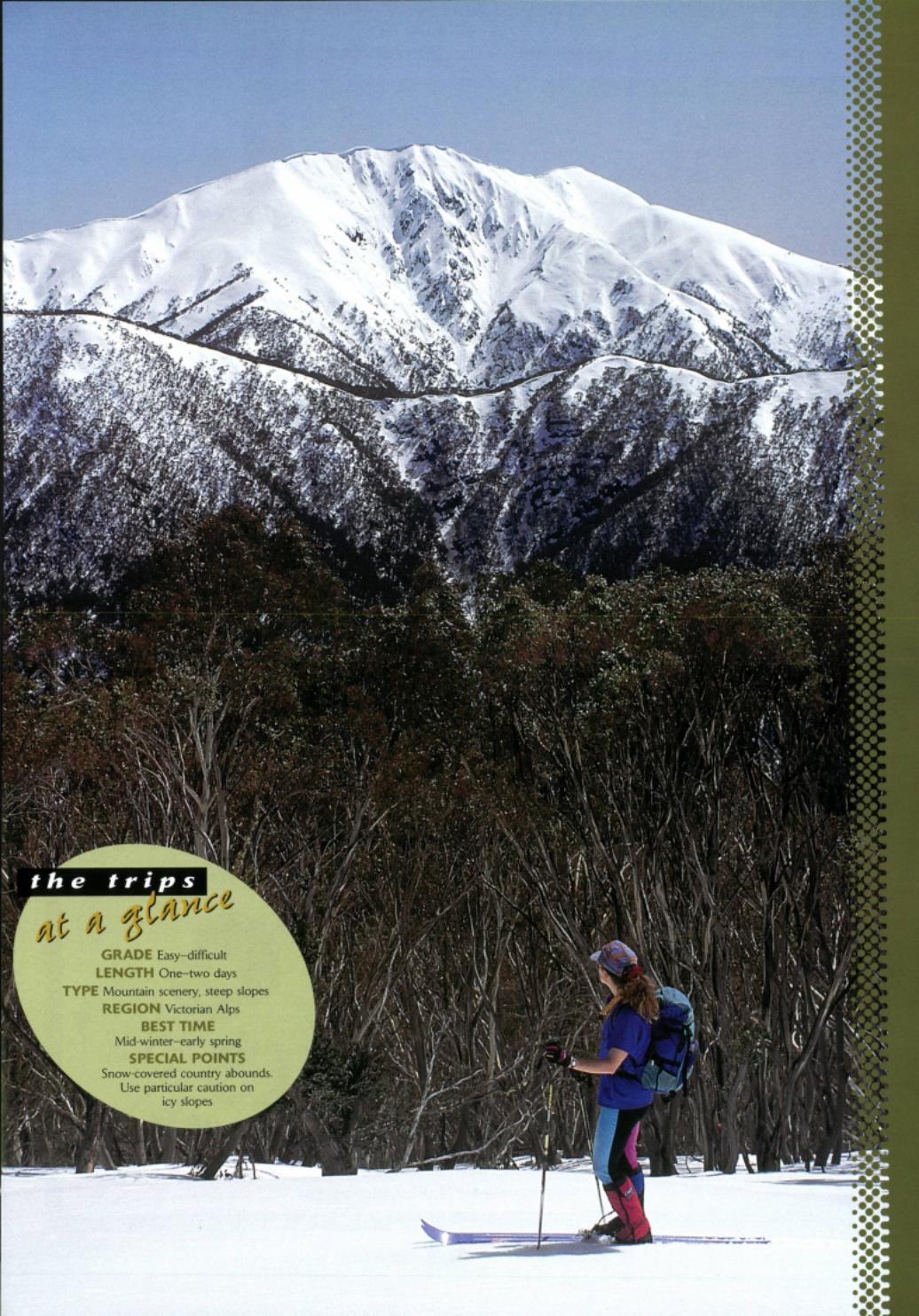
● Easiest

Mt Loch summit. Skiing to the summit of Mt Loch from Mt Hotham is probably one of the most popular back-country day-trips in the Alps. On a fine weekend in winter or spring dozens of skiers may visit the summit. Skiers need to be of a solid 'beginner plus' or intermediate standard. Handy skiing skills include side-stepping, traversing, kick- or tacking turns, side-slipping and, of course, the snowplough. Depending on your fitness and skill level allow at least four hours for the return trip. Don't even think about it in poor visibility and bad weather!

Follow the pole line from the Mt Loch car park along the ridge above Swindlers Creek and the Heavenly Valley downhill runs, past the Charles Derrick memorial to Derrick Col. From here you have two options. Either follow the pole line up the track through 'the Orchard' or traverse across the bowls at the head of Swindlers Creek. You are now climbing on to the Mt Loch plateau. The pole line dips away to the south-east toward Swindlers Spur and the Derrick Hut. The summit of Mt Loch is about 600 metres to the north. The easiest route is to skirt the summit to the west, then double back and climb to the summit cairn. Return the same way, with some good traverse and kick-turn practice to descend the Orchard to Derrick Col.

Left, Pat O'Sullivan dropping into a Machinery Spur bowl. **Right,** Rhyl Shaw on Machinery Spur, dwarfed by the South-east Face of Mt Feathertop. *All photos Michael Hampton*





the trips
at a glance

GRADE Easy-difficult

LENGTH One-two days

TYPE Mountain scenery, steep slopes

REGION Victorian Alps

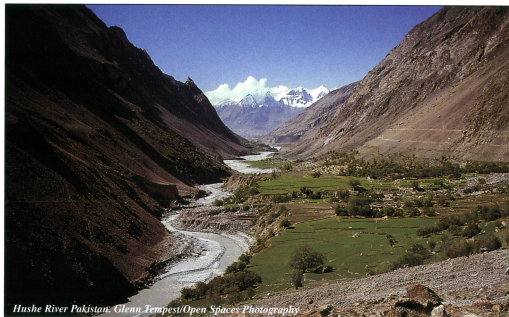
BEST TIME

Mid-winter-early spring

SPECIAL POINTS

Snow-covered country abounds.

Use particular caution on
icy slopes



Hunza River Pakistan, Glenn Tenpest/Open Spaces Photography



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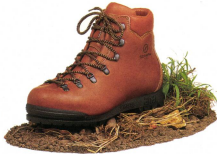
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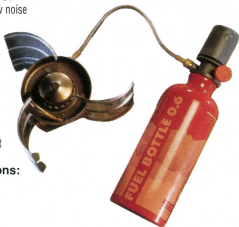
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00001/84

More difficult

Derricks and Spargos Huts. This and the Swindlers Spur tour aren't technically more difficult than the Mt Loch trip but cover quite a bit of extra territory, with obvious additional demands on fitness and skill. (These first three tours can be combined or skied in part depending on the skill and fitness of the skiers.) Skiing to Derricks Hut simply entails following the pole line all the way from the Mt Loch car park. Another option is to visit the Mt Loch summit first and then enjoy the kilometre-long downhill run from the summit, which is often schussed (as opposed to 'wussed') by confident skiers. From Derricks Hut ski up the easy slope to the south, skirt round the top of a gentle, east-facing bowl and enter open timber. Presently Spargos Hut can be seen from the top of a knoll out on a clearing at the end of the spur. In good conditions the ski down through the trees to the hut is a blast—classic ski touring. For a change of scenery on the return trip traverse round the western or Swindlers Creek side of the knoll to rejoin the pole line north-west of Derricks Hut eventually. Again, remember to leave enough time, and energy, for the return trip.

Swindlers Spur. Beyond Derricks Hut lies Swindlers Spur and the pole line to Cobungra Gap and Falls Creek. Wind rows

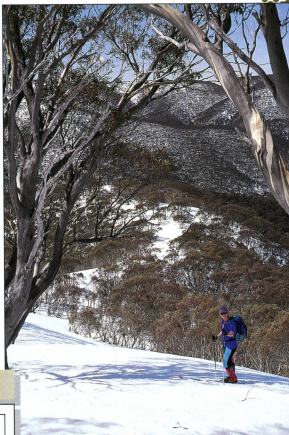
of gnarled snow gums, with their multicoloured bark, separate many small snow plains and combine to present a sheltered Alpine promontory to explore. There are about two and a half kilometres of it before the pole line drops away to the Cobungra River.

Machinery Spur—Red Robin Mine. From the end of Machinery Spur the view across the Diamantina Spur to the south-eastern slopes of Mt Feathertop is truly awesome and sure to inspire the avid XCD skier. Follow the ridge all the way north from the summit of Mt Loch. The Red Robin Mine is just off the eastern side of the spur below Red Robin Gap, an obvious low point on the ridge about two kilometres from the Mt Loch summit and just to the north of Dibbins Divide. A four-wheel-drive track descends to the mine site, which is only a short distance below the ridge.

Demanding Machinery Spur—Dibbins Divide—Dibbins Hut—Swindlers Spur. This is a classic day- or overnight trip for experienced back-country skiers of intermediate to advanced skill level. It takes in a wide range of terrain. Only undertake this tour when there's good snow cover right down

to Cobungra Gap. Get an early start. The best time is spring when the snow has just started to 'corn up'—gone into the melt-freeze stage and turned granular.

Start as for the Mt Loch summit trip, then continue out along Machinery Spur.

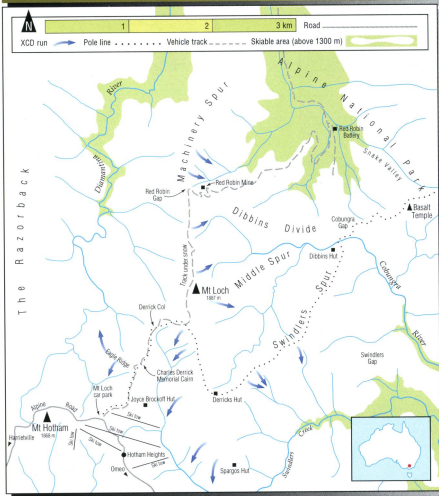


Rhyl Shaw on Dibbins Divide. Dibbins Spur can be seen dropping away to Cobungra Gap.

Dibbins Divide runs east off Machinery Spur about 1500 metres north of the Mt Loch summit. This is a major spur and is characterised by a saddle and open glades, and a knoll about one kilometre out. These features are obvious when approaching from Mt Loch. The skiing out to the knoll and just beyond is straightforward and there are some magnificent old snow gums to admire. The glades mentioned earlier would make good camp-sites. Not long after the knoll the spur becomes more pronounced and drops steadily away to Cobungra Gap. A mixture of traversing, side-slipping and kick- and/or jump turns comes in handy on this final descent to the Cobungra River and Dibbins Hut. It is possible to ski straight down through a stand of alpine ash to hit the river just upstream from the hut. This is a steep pitch that requires controlled side-slipping and is best avoided in icy conditions. The alternative is to continue north-east on the spur, then turn south-east to Cobungra Gap proper. Now follow the pole line back to Dibbins Hut.

On a warm spring day this is a pleasant, sheltered place to eat lunch and soak up

Mt Loch area



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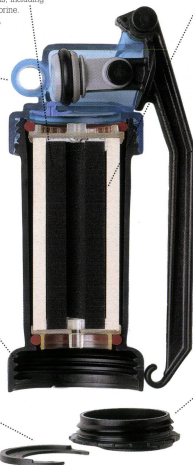
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some sun. However, don't underestimate the return trip and linger too long. The route along the pole line up the north-facing toe of Swindlers Spur is in full sun, so be prepared for some walking. You should be able to fit skis at about 1500 metres and enjoy a pleasantly undulating couple of kilometres to Derricks Hut. The final, slightly uphill 'trog' back north-west to the flanks of Mt Loch is the sting in the tail. Then there's still the Loch Ridge to negotiate. The light is usually quite good at this time of day so make a pause to take a few photographs!

SNOW-CAMPING

Scattered along the wide ridge between Derricks and Spargos Huts are some sheltered glades ideal for a base camp. Swindlers Spur, too, has some excellent possibilities. Parties, especially large parties, camping near Derricks Hut should be aware of their possible impact on the limited water-supply and the toilet facilities. Remember that Derricks Hut is a refuge and not an overnight accommodation base.

XCD RUNS

Whether you're day-tripping from the Mt Hotham village or base camping on the plateau, there's a wide range of possible XCD runs to suit all levels. Eagle Ridge, on the opposite side of the Mt Loch ridge to Marys Slide, was an excellent venue for some intermediate to extreme XCD skiing until a certain well-known ski photographer told the rest of Australia, and especially snowboarders, about it. Some of Mt Hotham's best back-country runs drop into Swindlers Creek from the east. One Tree Hill has a famous glade which always seems to boast ski tracks. These days back-country skiers are facing increased competition from alpine skiers and snowboarders to get first tracks on the most popular and accessible back-country runs.

The ridge from Mt Loch to Spargos Hut runs north-south. There are many moderate and sheltered slopes to the east of this ridge north of Derricks Hut. Between Derricks and Spargos Huts are numerous gentle slopes and glades of every aspect, perfect places to noodle about and practise turns. Some steep and challenging bowls and gullies that are rarely skied drop south-east from Swindlers Spur. For intermediate and advanced XCD skiers Machinery Spur, and especially the final section beyond Dibbins Divide, offers steep gully and bowl skiing similar to that on the nearby Razorback. Don't forget that this is a remote location. Exercise caution when conditions are firm or icy. ☹️

Michael Hampton (see Contributors in *Wild* no 17) lives in Marysville in Victoria's High Country and works during winter as a Nordic ski instructor at Lake Mountain. He has pioneered many XCD runs in the Australian Alps and has skied extensively overseas.



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The Castle and Monolith Valley

A short walk through a magical landscape



Seven Gods Pinnacles, the Castle, Byangee Walls, Monolith Valley, Shrouded Gods Mountain, the Dojo, Pigeon House, Dark Brothers Cave, Pagoda Rocks—the names conjure up a magical landscape in which the characters of a Tolkien novel would feel entirely at home.

In the Budawangs, reality matches imagery. This small, coastal range about 100 kilometres east of Canberra abounds with rewarding walking and magnificent scenery. There are flat-topped mountains with tiers of sandstone cliffs, expansive summits of heathland and rock-pools, open valleys of eucalypt woodland, hidden pockets of cool,

temperate rainforest, cathedral-like camping caves that provide 'million-star' hotels. At the centre lies Monolith Valley, where all the features of the Budawangs collide in a mysterious, chaotic maze of canyons, cliffs, valleys and summits. The Castle, with its impregnable rock walls and its bristling, dragon-like tail dropping away towards Monolith Valley, stands as a formidable sentry guarding access to the jewel of the Budawangs.

There are many possibilities for multiday walks but the Castle/Monolith Valley combination is undoubtedly the favourite. The walk can be done in either two or

The wonderful view from the Castle. **Right**, the Seven Gods Pinnacles, one of the landmarks of the Monolith Valley walk. All photos Will Steffen collection

three days. The latter allows a full circuit of Mt Cole and half a back-up day to climb the Castle in case high winds or rain force a retreat from an earlier attempt.

● When to go

The best time is from mid-autumn to spring (April to October) when the days are often cool and crisp and the air is clear. The summer months tend to be very hot, water-

supplies can be intermittent, and there is a significant risk of bushfire.

● Maps

Corang 1:25 000 Central Mapping Authority (NSW) map; *The Northern Budawang Range* sketch map, produced by the Budawang Committee; *Batemans Bay State Forests*, produced by the NSW Forestry Commission.

● Access

From either north or south (Sydney or Melbourne) it is easiest and quickest to

From the west (Canberra) follow the Kings Highway to the foot of Clyde Mountain. Take the Western Distributor Forest Road to the second junction with Long Gully Forest Road and follow the signs to the Castle Walking Track. The total trip takes about three hours, with one hour on the Western Distributor.

● The walk

It is useful for intending parties to have solid navigational skills as it is easy to lose the tracks in the maze of valleys and canyons.

of the false tracks which lead down towards the valley and necessitate considerable bush bashing and loss of time to regain the right track. The track does dip away from the cliff on a few occasions either to cross gullies or to avoid fallen jumbles of rocks, but in these cases the detours are short and the track heads directly back towards the cliff base as soon as the obstacle is passed.

At the end of the cliff-base, you come to a large, spacious cave; an ideal place for a break and a bite to eat. There is usually water available in a tiny stream trickling down the rock slope. After passing the cave, the track turns the corner round the rock and begins to head up towards the saddle between the Castle and Mt Nibelung. Soon you'll climb a short, steep, eroded gully followed by a second, longer gully. The latter has been vastly improved by recent track works to control erosion and keep traffic to a single route. Please stay strictly on the new track to facilitate revegetation of the eroded areas.

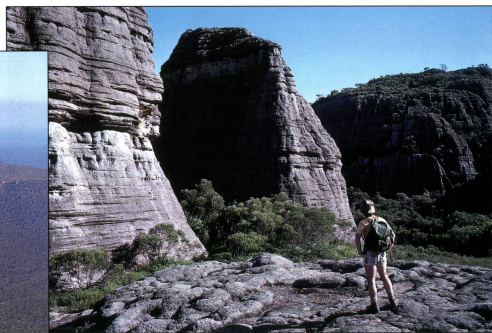
At the top of the new track works the track splits; the left-hand branch proceeds to the saddle while the track which continues directly up heads for a tunnel at the base of the Castle's tail. The tunnel route is interesting and shorter for those climbing the Castle in a day but may be awkward for heavily laden parties. Those wishing to camp in the vicinity of the Castle should follow the saddle route.

At the saddle there are a number of options: climb the Castle; set up camp either on the saddle or near Cooyoyo Creek about 20 minutes down from the saddle to the north-east; or visit Monolith Valley. If you decide to camp on or near the saddle you'll need to continue towards Monolith Valley (see below) to find water.

To make the optional and more challenging ascent of the Castle turn right at the saddle junction and side round to the east side of the mountain. The track again follows the base of the cliff. You soon pass the exit to the tunnel through the tail of the Castle—marked on a rock—and then a spacious camping cave. Just beyond this the track steepens and the scramble to the top begins, marked by three arrows carved into a rock, pointing up.

The route to the summit is convoluted and there are many places where you can take a wrong turn and end up in a cul-de-sac. If no one in your party knows the route, allow a bit more than the usual two-three hours for the return trip from the saddle.

Begin the climb by scrambling up and round to a gully leading up below a slab. Take care here. The route goes left across the top of the slab (note arrow on rock)



approach the Budawangs along the Princes Highway, then turn inland at Termeil and follow the signs along forest roads to Pigeon House. Continue on the Yabbor Forest Road past the Pigeon House walk turn-off to the junction of Long Gully Forest Road, and from there follow the signs to the Castle Walking Track. The drive from the Princes Highway takes about 45 minutes to an hour.

Particulars of planned journeys should be lodged with the NSW National Parks & Wildlife Service office in Ulladulla.

The walk begins at the car park off Long Gully Forest Road. There is a camping area here but campers should note that the Yabbor River is polluted and should either treat the water or bring their own supply.

From the camping ground/car park, follow the signs to the start of the track. Cross the Yabbor River and walk through a rainforest gully for a few hundred metres. The track then climbs gently out of the gully to meet Kalianna Ridge, then turns north on to the ridge staying level or heading slightly downhill at first and then climbing towards the Castle. The angle steepens noticeably just before you reach a conglomerate slope where you will see a sign giving distances to the Castle and Monolith Valley.

The conglomerate slope can be negotiated by climbing directly up it for those sure of their scrambling abilities, or by traversing below it to the left and then following a gully up to the top. Keep away from the loose gully with the old, fixed rope near the left edge of the slope.

At the top of the conglomerate slope the track heads north along the base of the Castle, staying close to the cliffline. Avoid taking one

the walk at a glance

GRADE Moderate but with some harder sections of rock scrambling

LENGTH Two or three days

TYPE Sandstone escarpment, heathland, valleys, rainforest pockets

REGION South coast of NSW

BEST TIME

Late autumn/winter/early spring

SPECIAL POINTS

No camping or fires in Monolith Valley Protected Area; camp-fires discouraged elsewhere in the area

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and does *not* continue up the gully. As many people have gone wrong here the false track is prominent. (It leads to a steep rock wall with a rope, probably evidence of a nerve-racking retreat.)

Beyond the slab the route continues with relatively easy scrambling up through two switchbacks, up another gully at the base of a rock wall and then left up a groove into a jumble of rocks. A short chimney move and scramble lead over the boulders and on to the top of the Castle's tail, where a series of rocky gendarmes blocks the way to the summit. Continue across the top of the first gendarme, pass a second gendarme on its left, and then a third on a narrow rock ledge on the right.

The final climb to the top may require a rope for those not confident of their scrambling abilities. Start up a short rock gully with chipped holds, then step right and up a groove past a tree. A short chimney past a bulge of rock leads to the final gully. Another short chimney with a rock wedged in the top is the final obstacle. Once on top, the 15 minutes' scramble to the southern end is well worth while. The views are outstanding—Byangee Walls, Pigeon House, the coast and the Tasman Sea, the escarpment to the south, and the massive walls of Mt Owen around to the west.

To visit Monolith Valley and its charming mosaic of open woodlands, narrow rock canyons and closed rainforest pockets, turn left at

the saddle between the Castle and Mt Nibelung and climb toward the base of the latter's rock walls. Follow along for 20 or 30 minutes passing a camping cave and two places where water trickling over the cliff above can be collected for those camping in the caves or the saddle area.

After the second water-supply, the track turns left and climbs into Nibelung Pass, a narrow cleft between Mts Nibelung and Mooryan. Pass the sign for the Monolith Valley Protected Area in which no camping

Arch on the left and along a stream with small pools and miniature waterfalls. A short distance past the arch the track goes into an enclosed, rocky alcove that appears to be a dead end. Go into the alcove and follow a narrow chasm out the back which leads into a secluded canyon of tree ferns, mossy rocks and vertical walls. The track then climbs through the back of the canyon and out into dry woodland. The abrupt change in vegetation and microclimate is remarkable.

On the right are the Seven Gods Pinnacles, free-standing monoliths that diminish in size as you continue along the track. The view from the last small pinnacle over Holland Gorge is spectacular. If time is short this is a good turnaround point for the walk back to the Castle saddle area.

For a full day's walk, the route which continues past the Pinnacles and round Mt Cole is most rewarding. The track turns into the gap between Mt Cole and the Dojon, dropping into a rainforest gully briefly before emerging on the much drier west side of Mt Cole. The ramble along the base of Mt Cole is pleasant, with several of the Budawang's most spacious camping caves located along this route. The soaring roofs of these caves are composed of particularly beautiful eroded sandstone.

At the south-west end of Mt Cole the track turns and ascends the narrowing gap between Mts Cole and Owen. Near the saddle the route goes up a gently angled slab and then into the saddle itself. Do not continue down the other side here but rather turn sharply right on the saddle itself and climb a short gully to the summit plateau of Mt Owen. Turn east almost immediately and follow faint tracks and

The descent to Monolith Valley from Mt Owen.

or fires are allowed, continue through the pass and then climb a short, steep rock gully on the right. The gully can be a little treacherous if wet or muddy and a chain has been fixed to assist your ascent or descent.

Once above the gully you step into the outer reaches of Monolith Valley itself. Follow the path through alternating patches of bare rock and bush, taking care to find the proper entry point into the bush at the end of each rock patch. Here are many opportunities to admire the intriguing rock formations littered across the floor of the valley. The track winds down into a rainforest pocket, crossing a small, wooden bridge. Just past the bridge the track splits, with the route to Mt Owen to the left and Mt Cole, the Natural Arch, and the Seven Gods Pinnacles to the right.

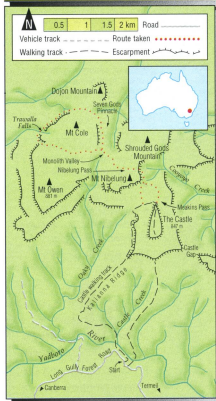
The better route is to the right, towards the Pinnacles. The path goes through a delightful rainforest gully past the Natural

Arch on the left and along a stream with small pools and miniature waterfalls. A short distance past the arch the track goes into an enclosed, rocky alcove that appears to be a dead end. Go into the alcove and follow a narrow chasm out the back which leads into a secluded canyon of tree ferns, mossy rocks and vertical walls. The track then climbs through the back of the canyon and out into dry woodland. The abrupt change in vegetation and microclimate is remarkable.

Although the distances in the Castle/Monolith Valley area are not long, allow plenty of time for the walks. Even if you don't take the occasional wrong turn and have to poke around to find the right way, no doubt you'll want to linger at the countless rocky viewing points and secluded rest spots to savour the incredible variety of landforms and vistas in this spectacular range. ●

Will Steffen (see Contributors in *Wild* no 26), his wife *Carrie* and their daughter *Sonja* lead an active outdoors life based in Canberra. He is a frequent contributor to *Wild* on subjects ranging from outdoors equipment to the fate of major Himalayan expeditions.

The Castle and Monolith Valley area



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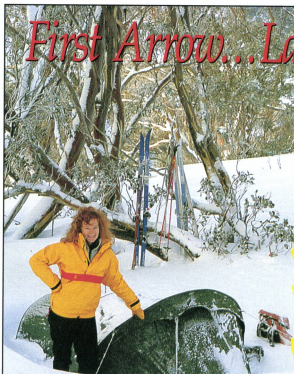
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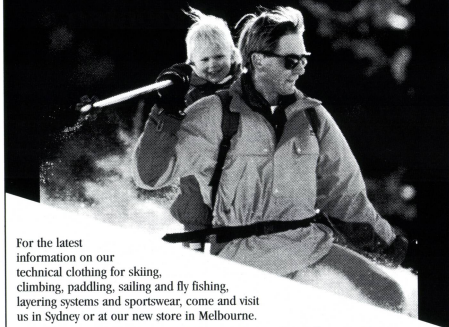
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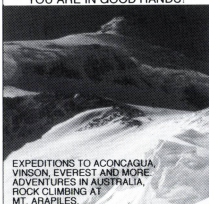
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Touring and XCD skis

Michael Hampton shreds 'em

Ski touring is an 'umbrella' term for a diverse range of activities, from a few hours spent pottering on the trails to multiday expeditions over the planet's expanses of snow, both mountainous and flat. The scope of ski touring is as vast as the horizons you explore. So it comes as no surprise that the array of quite different skis on the market could confuse the would-be buyer.

Points to watch

Storing skis

Spend a little more and buy a ski bag—transport and storage become easier.

Tuning the bases

Depending on what sort of factory finish your ski bases have it may be desirable to have the bases 'stone ground' and professionally tuned at a ski shop.

Waxing

Glide wax smooth-soled skis frequently, and for 'automatic' skis glide wax the tips and tails and clean the pattern every so often. Always leave a layer of wax on the bases for summer storage.

No more balling

In fresh, wet snow conditions pattern-based 'automatic' skis can be prone to 'balling up' with snow under the foot. Applying silicone to the sole and pattern will prevent this. Even Mr Sheen or Pure and Simple work well.

Clean edges

Keep the edges free of burrs and rust. A file can be used to remove burrs.

Binding maintenance

Maintain and lubricate your bindings and spray them with silicone regularly to prevent snow build-up under the balls of your feet.

Plan before you buy

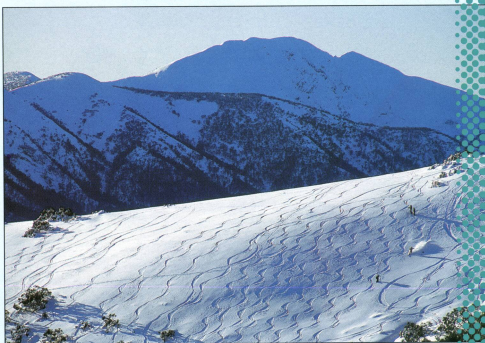
If you've really 'got the bug' and expect to get in lots of skiing don't be afraid to buy performance skis you will grow into. It's better than being stuck with skis that you outgrow quickly.

Matching boots to skis

Match your skis with boots that are up to the job. If you're matching heavy XCD/Telemark skis to plastic cuff boots you might consider release bindings.

Get suitable ski poles

Don't skimp on poles. Light but strong adjustable types are ideal for touring and back-country XCD.



This survey should help you to decide not so much which ski to buy, but what type of ski best suits your needs. If you are having trouble working out your precise requirements maybe you need more than one pair of skis! The survey only covers skis that are suitable for day- and overnight touring and XCD (cross-country downhill) or Telemark skiing—the 'heavy' end of the cross-country or 'free-heel' spectrum. All the skis covered have a metal edge of some kind.

Ten to 15 years ago XCD and cross-country ski touring pretty much went hand in glove. Over the last few years, however, XCD (or Telemark) skis have developed into more specialised tools. Indeed, many of today's XCD/Telemark skis are designed solely for lift-serviced skiing. In reality, XCD/Telemark skiing has gone full circle back to the early days of alpine or downhill skiing. Kevlar and plastic having replaced leather and wood. Before committing yourself to purchasing a set of skis, think carefully about the uses to which you are likely to put them and seek advice from experienced ski-shop salespeople and technicians. If you are taking lessons talk to your instructor, who can give you honest advice in regard to your standard and potential learning curve.

The joys of untracked snow? Mt Feathertop looms over skiers having fun on Eagle Ridge, Victoria. Glenn Tempest

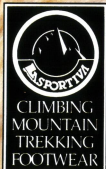
Tools for the task

Put simply, the scale goes like this: At one end are skis that perform well on the flat but are not so good for turning on the downhill—classic touring skis. At the other end are the skis for the mountains, designed purely for downhill runs.

This survey summarises the findings of the writer, who was selected for the task because of, among other things, his knowledge of the subject and his impartiality. The survey was checked and verified by Glenn Tempest, and reviewed by at least three of *Wild's* editorial staff. Despite such efforts to achieve accuracy and impartiality, no survey is perfect. Apart from the obvious human elements that may affect assessment, the quality, materials and specifications of any product may vary markedly from batch to batch and even from sample to sample. It is ultimately the responsibility of readers to determine what is best for their particular circumstances and the use they have in mind for gear reviewed.

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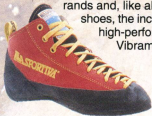
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These skins have the potential to turn like demons, but when gravity ceases to be on your side they tend to take on the characteristics of snowshoes. For overnight touring with a rucksack, a medium-weight ski of at least 60 millimetres width is usually most suitable. Be aware of a ski's limitations and ability to cope with the rigours of the tasks demanded of it. Although metal edges are not essential for long

tours, most overnight tourers and/or XCD skiers prefer the security and strength of wider, robust, metal-edged skis.

Choosing a ski primarily for touring will entail compromise. To reiterate, a stiff, parallel-sided ski will be faster on the flat but unfortunately the same ski will require more skill to turn on the downhill. A softer, evenly flexing ski with more side-cut or 'waisting' will turn easily but the special-

ised XCD skis will be slower when shuffling on the flat. For many years some XCD skiers have been using climbing skins to overcome this problem. Softer, evenly flexing skis, usually coupled with synthetic climbing skins for grip, are now preferred by many skiers for touring. In mountainous terrain, and when carrying a heavy rucksack, the security and grip of skins make sense.

Wild Gear Survey

Touring and XCD skis

Survey	Width at tip/waist/tail, millimetres	Weight of 200 cm pair, grams	Flex overall, stiffness	Lengths available, centimetres	Construction	Edges	Grip pattern	Waxing and/or skins	Suitability for			Comments	Approx price, \$	
									Touring	BC XCD	Lit-served freemaking			
Asnes Norway														
Lillehammer	60/51/56	1900	Uneven, St (WP)	180-215	Laminated wood core, ABS side walls	3/4 steel	Fish-scale	None	●●●●	●●	nr	Lighter touring ski	540	
Sondre Nordheim	63/54/58	2300	Slightly uneven, St (WP)	180-215	As above	Steel	Fish-scale	None	●●●●	●●	●	Softer wax pocket. Classic touring/XCD ski	585	
Super Telemark	68/56/60	2750	Even, St	190-210	Laminated wood core, ABS side walls, Titalan top sheet	Steel	None	Skins	●●	●●	●●●●	Telemark racing ski. Likes speed	725	
Black Diamond USA														
Synchro X	72/54/63	2064 (198 cm)	Even, St-M	191, 198, 205	Torsion-box cap, wood core	Steel	Negative fish-scale	None	●●●●	●●●1/2	●●	Performance touring ski	480	
Eclipse	83.5/63.5/73	3074	Even, St-M	180-205	Foam/Wood core, fibreglass sandwich, torsion-box cap	Steel	None	Skins	●●●	●●●●	●●●	All-round XCD ski	500	
Boundary	87/65/79	3081	Even, St-M	180-205	As above	Steel	None	Skins	●●	●●●1/2	●●●1/2	All-round crud and deep snow ski	600	
Fischer Austria														
E99 Telemark Crown	65/55/60	2300	Slightly uneven, St-M (WP)	180, 190-210	'Aircore' wood/fibreglass sandwich, ABS top sheet and side walls	Steel	'Double Crown' fish-scale insert	None	●●●●	●●●	●	Classic touring and XCD ski, beefed-up version of E99 Crown	395	
E99 Crown	65/55/60	2300	Slightly uneven, St-M (WP)	180-215	As above	Steel	As above	None	●●●●	●●	nr	Classic touring ski	405	
GTS Super	76/62/69	2700	Even, M	180, 190, 200-210	Wood core/Titalan sandwich, ABS top sheet and side walls	Steel	None	Skins	●●	●●●1/2	●●●1/2	All-round XCD ski	425	
GTS Extreme	73/55/69	2700	Even, M	190, 200-205	As above	Steel	None	Skins	●●	●●	●●●●	Telemark competition ski	465	
Karhu Canada														
Kodak Kinetic	60/52/57	2240	Slightly uneven, St (WP)	180, 190-215	Foam/fibreglass sandwich, torsion box, epoxy side walls	1/3 segmented steel	'Kinetic' fish-scale insert	None	●●●●	●●●	nr	Softer touring ski with good grip	360	
Catamount Kinetic	85/70/80	2240 (160 cm)	na	160, 175, 190	As above	Segmented steel	As above	None	na	na	na	Not seen by author	365	
XCD GT Kinetic	62/54/59	2440	Slightly uneven, St-M (WP)	180, 190-215	As above	Steel	As above	None	●●●●	●●●1/2	●●	Classic touring/XCD ski	370	
10th Mountain Tour	68/55/60	3040 (198 cm)	Even, St-M	188, 193, 198, 203, 207, 212	As above	Segmented steel	As above	None	●●●1/2	●●●●	●●	All-round XCD with benefits/drawbacks of Kinetic grip pattern	480	
Morotto Italy														
Rondane	59/50/55	2400	Even, M	180, 190-210	Wood core, ABS side walls	Steel	Incub fish-scale	None	●●●●	●●●	●●	All-round touring, BC/XCD ski	450	
Light Tele-step	66/54/60	2600	Even, St-M	180, 190-210	Wood laminate, fibreglass reinforced, ABS side walls	Steel	Incub fish-scale	None	●●●	●●●	●●	BC touring and turning ski	480	
Dolomiti Step	72/50/55	3200	Even, M-St	180, 190-210	Wood core, Titalan top deck, ABS side walls	Steel	Incub fish-scale	None	●●●●	●●●1/2	●●●	All-round BC/XCD ski (All Morotto assessments made by referee—not seen by author)	530	
Tua Italy														
Escape S	65/53.5/60	2300	Slightly uneven St-M	180, 190, 200-210	Wood core/fibreglass, ABS top sheet and side walls	Steel	Incub fish-scale	Waxing version available	●●●●	●●●	●●	Touring	550	
Montets MX	84/64/74	3100 (202 cm)	Even, M	187, 192, 197, 202, 207	Wood core/fibreglass, torsion-box cap	Steel	None	Skins	●●	●●●●	●●●●	Performance Telemark ski	800	
● poor ●● average ●●● good ●●●● excellent BC back country M medium na not assessed nr not recommended St stiff St soft WP wax pocket or second camber														
XCD cross-country downhill														



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WMA 1/3

Width. In deep, untracked snow, wider skis—typically those with a full metal edge and which are designed specifically for overnight use—will provide greater 'floatation' than thinner skis. However, on firm snow a narrower ski will glide faster. It is also generally accepted that the more 'waisting' or side-cut a ski has, the easier it will be to turn. There are a few other factors which affect the turning characteristics of a ski. One is the evenness and stiffness of a ski's overall flex; another is whether the ski has a smooth base or a grip pattern. It would probably be safe to say that the less side-cut a ski has, the harder it will be to turn, and vice versa.

Weight. While a light ski is not necessarily weaker than a heavy one, weight does affect a ski's turning characteristics—as does torsional stiffness (a ski's built-in resistance to lateral twisting). Generally, a lighter, soft ski will be unpredictable or 'skittish' on hardpack snow at speed whereas a heavier, stiffer ski will be more predictable, stable and 'damp'. Skittish skis are fine if the skier 'treads' lightly and doesn't push them till they vibrate off the snow. Damp skis, however, can be less responsive and more suited to long-radius, 'cruising' turns—and speed! The weights shown in the table are for a 200 centimetre pair unless otherwise stated. Knowing this, you can work out how much a ski of any given length will weigh. Again, if you are shopping for one pair of general purpose skis you will have to compromise.

Flex. A ski's flex will tell the experienced skier quite a lot about its potential turning performance. The usual test is to place the tail of the ski on the floor, hold the tip in one hand and push out the middle of the ski. Feel the resistance or stiffness and by looking down the ski's length notice the evenness of its flex. Touring skis have a 'wax pocket' or stiffer section under the foot which to varying degrees will interrupt the ski's overall flex. This pocket will be present in most of the pattern-based skis. The wax pocket has been referred to as a second or double camber. Designers have been progressively softening the stiffness of this wax pocket, and it would be more accurate to say that these skis have one and a half cambers! The presence of a wax pocket (WP) is noted in the table under 'Flex'. Hold the ski and twist the tip to get some idea of its torsional stiffness.

Length. When selecting touring skis, stand alongside a ski and put one hand in the air. With the ski standing straight, the tip should touch your wrist. There are, however, variations to this rule. If you are tall and light, you may want to select a shorter ski. Try a longer ski if you are heavy for your height. For purely downhill performance on wider Telemark skis the new rule of thumb is to add five to ten centimetres to your height, or subtract five

to ten centimetres from the hand-above-head rule. (Ski lengths usually jump in five centimetre increments unless otherwise stated.)

Construction. Skis were once made from wood. The next step was to laminate strips of wood and fit a plastic sole. This was finally 'iced' with a plastic or fibreglass top sheet. That is your basic wood-sandwich ski. However, when wood is exposed

Edges. While metal edges will provide security in icy conditions and protect the ski's sole, they may cause cosmetic damage to the top of the skis (no big deal). Don't forget that the edges at the tips and tails of your skis need to be de-tuned (rounded). Steel is used on most metal-edged skis but aluminium may be used on some touring models. Besides adding to the weight of a ski, metal edges will stiffen

a ski's overall flex. To overcome this some manufacturers produce skis with segmented metal edges. Another method is to fit skis with a three-quarter metal edge, with the edge-like the pattern—under the foot where most pressure is applied.

Grip pattern. Waxless or 'automatic' skis dominate the purely touring ski market. One of the most important decisions you have to make is whether to go for a pattern base or a smooth-soled ski. The pattern grips the snow when the ski is weighted and pushed down, but allows the ski to slide forward. This is a convenient means of getting about but the trade-off is interference with the ski's gliding properties, caused by the drag and friction of the pattern against the snow. Negative patterns (those that don't protrude) create less drag than positive patterns (those that do). Some patterns are cut into the sole material of the ski, whereas other patterns—such as the Crown or Kinetic—are inserts.

Waxing/skins. All smooth-soled skis can be waxed for grip but most skiers will use climbing skins when skiing in the back country. Another tip for those skiing in the back country on smooth-soled skis is to learn how to skate. Also, use adjustable poles which can be fully extended

when skating.

Touring. These are the skis that will perform best when travelling across the snow. Bullets show degrees of suitability.

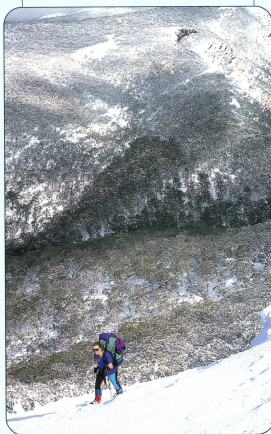
Back country (BC) XCD. These are skis that should offer optimum performance for those wishing to climb for runs in the back country and link turns in a wide range of snow conditions.

Lift-serviced Telemarking. These are the skis that will perform best when skiing lift-serviced slopes. These are the 'turners'. Bullets show degrees of suitability.

Comments. Any additional information is noted here.

Look after your new skis. The best skis are happy skis, and happy skis perform best because they're looked after and get plenty of exercise! And don't forget the old adage that the very best tools are only as good as the workperson in charge of them. Have fun, practise, take some lessons and keep an open mind! ☺

Michael Hampton (See Contributors in Wild no 17) lives in Marysville in Victoria's High Country and works during winter as a Nordic ski instructor at Lake Mountain. He has pioneered many XCD runs in the Australian Alps and has skied extensively overseas.



Traversing Mt Magdala, Victoria, in heavy snow conditions. Michael Hampton

to abrasive snow it may admit moisture with the possibility of core damage and delamination. Therefore an ABS or plastic-coated side wall is desirable for Australian conditions.

Another method of construction is to substitute the wood core with injection-moulded foam to create a foam sandwich. The use of lightweight substances such as carbon fibre and Kevlar provides a tough, springy top sheet. Some XCD skis utilise aluminium or similar for the same purpose (as do many alpine skis). Being less prone to damage from metal edges these skis fit into the heavier category. Torsion box is a durable construction in which fibreglass is wrapped around the core material. Over the last few years the capped 'monocoque' torsion-box construction has gone a long way towards replacing wood and foam-sandwich construction in performance models. By eliminating the ski side walls the capped construction enhances the ski's overall strength, durability and performance characteristics.

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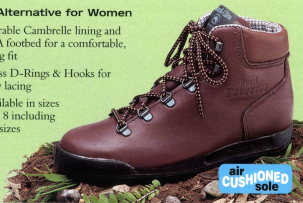
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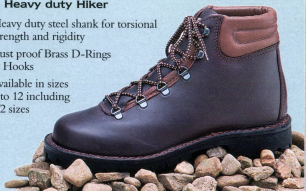
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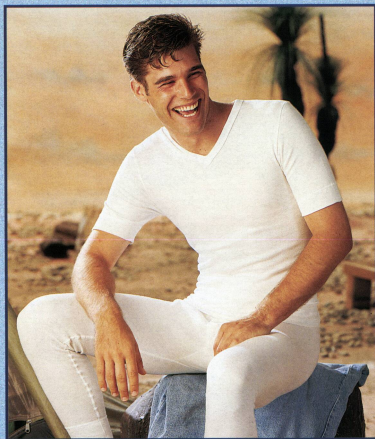
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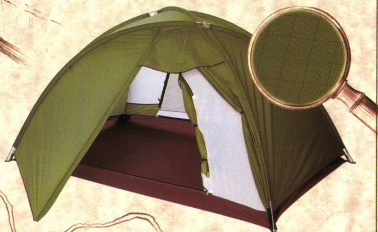
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Sleeping-mats

Self-inflating and closed-cell foam mats—a *Wild* survey

You may have the best tent and sleeping-bag money can buy but if the ground on which you lie is uncomfortable and cold you can kiss a good night's sleep goodbye. A sleeping-mat will help to insulate you from such an experience.

There are two broad types of sleeping-mats. Mats made from closed-cell foam provide relatively cheap, lightweight and maintenance-free insulation. Not only can you use one inside your tent but you can sit on one at lunch-time, kneel on one while digging a snow-cave or even roll around on one while struggling to fit snow-chains to the wheels of your car. Apart from getting it dirty you cannot do a great deal of damage to a mat made from closed-cell foam. (For these reasons, and because of their better performance at very low temperatures—not relevant in Australia—they are preferred by mountaineers, who usually use two mats.)

Closed-cell mats are either chemically blown or pressure blown, with the latter method considered to



**Wild
Equipment
Survey**

Sleeping-mats

Survey

	Weight, grams	Dimensions, l x w x t, centimetres	Rolled size, centimetres	Comfort	Conditions for which suitable			Value for money	Comments	Approx price, \$
					Mild	Cold	Snow			
Closed-cell foam										
Caribee Korea/Philippines										
Camp Mat	340	180 x 50 x 0.8	50 x 14	●●	●●●●	●1/2	●	●●●●		10
Tramper Mat	500	185 x 50 x 1	50 x 16	●●	●●●●	●●1/2	●●	●●●		25
Cascade Designs USA										
Ridge Rest 48	255	119 x 51 x 1.6	51 x 16	●●1/2	●●●●	●1/2	●	●●		30
Ridge Rest 72	400	183 x 51 x 1.6	51 x 19	●●1/2	●●●●	●●●	●●1/2	●●●		40
Ridge Rest Deluxe	519	183 x 51 x 1.6	51 x 22	●●1/2	●●●●	●●●	●●1/2	●●		55
Z Rest	457	183 x 51 x 0.9	51 x 13 x 13	●●	●●●●	●●1/2	●●	●●	Is folded like an accordion, rather than rolled	60
Karrimor UK (Karrimat)										
3 Season	na	180 x 50 x 0.8	na	●●	●●●●	●1/2	●	●●●		30
4 Season	na	185 x 55 x 1	na	●●	●●●●	●●1/2	●●	●●●		35
Expedition	na	148 x 48 x 0.8	na	●●	●●●●	●1/2	●	●●		55
	na	185 x 58 x 0.8	58 x 15	●●	●●●●	●●●	●●1/2	●●		70
Extreme	na	185 x 58 x 1.2	58 x 17	●●	●●●●	●●●●	●●●	●●		100
Outback Australia										
Camp Mat	na	200 x 50 x 0.8	50 x 15	●●	●●●●	●1/2	●	●●●●		10
	na	200 x 50 x 1	50 x 17	●●	●●●●	●●1/2	●	●●●●		15
● poor ●● average ●●● good ●●●● excellent l length t thickness w width na information not available										

● poor ●● average ●●● good ●●●● excellent l length t thickness w width na information not available

Another use for the humble sleeping-mat. (Will Mr Kennett have them in his new casino?) *Stephen Curtain*

produce a mat with slightly better durability and warmth.

Self-inflating, open-cell foam mats usually provide better insulation and comfort.

This survey summarises the findings of the writer, who was selected for the task because of, among other things, his knowledge of the subject and his impartiality. The survey was checked and verified by *Anton Weller*, and reviewed by at least three of *Wild's* editorial staff. Despite such efforts to achieve accuracy and impartiality, no survey is perfect. Apart from the obvious human elements that may affect assessment, the quality, materials and specifications of any product may vary markedly from batch to batch and even from sample to sample. It is ultimately the responsibility of readers to determine what is best for their particular circumstances and the use they have in mind for gear reviewed.

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However, this comes at a price: they are generally more expensive, heavier and more susceptible to tears and punctures than the closed-cell variety.

A shorter mat will insulate your torso while helping you to reduce the weight and volume of accessories stuffed into your pack. People who find comfort important but hate to carry more weight than necessary often carry a short, self-inflating mat. When conditions are colder, a small section of closed-cell foam is carried to insulate below the knees. The ratings for **comfort** in the table do not take into account these differences in lengths but are based largely on thickness.

Closed-cell mats are frequently carried on the outside of your pack although if you intend to do this make sure that you wrap the mat in a tough garbage bag first to prevent pieces of foam from being torn off your mat and littering the track. As self-inflating mats are more susceptible to damage, a small-size roll

is important to allow the mat to be packed inside your rucksack. As can be seen from the table, some mats are folded in half lengthwise before being rolled (which produces a narrower but thicker roll) while others are rolled at full width. The **roll sizes** listed should be considered approximate and will vary depending on how carefully the mat is rolled and how meticulous you have been in removing the air from it first.

Many of the manufacturers represented in this survey produce other, heavier, sleeping-mats but these have been excluded because their weight makes them less suitable for the rucksack sports.

Most manufacturers make a lightweight, self-inflating mat, an option which may seem to combine the best of both worlds—light weight and good comfort. However, to reduce the mat's weight is to make it thinner which will result in it supplying less insulation and comfort than a heavier mat. Blowing extra air into a self-inflating mat will increase insulation but may make the

mat harder and less comfortable. In a recent development in sleeping-mat design, some self-inflating mats have holes bored through the foam while remaining airtight. The benefit is that such a mat will weigh less than one of traditional construction and equal thickness. This means that for the same weight one of these mats can be made significantly thicker and thus provide better warmth and comfort.

The comfort of closed-cell and self-inflating mats cannot really be compared—the latter generally have a great advantage—and so the ratings in the two tables are not related. However, in using a closed-cell foam mat there are advantages which for some outweigh their reputation for a harder night's sleep (see the 'Points to consider' box).

In the tables each mat is rated according to how well it should insulate you in three general conditions. **Mild conditions** cover low altitudes and the warmer months of the year. **Cold conditions** refer to any

Wild Equipment Survey

Sleeping-mats

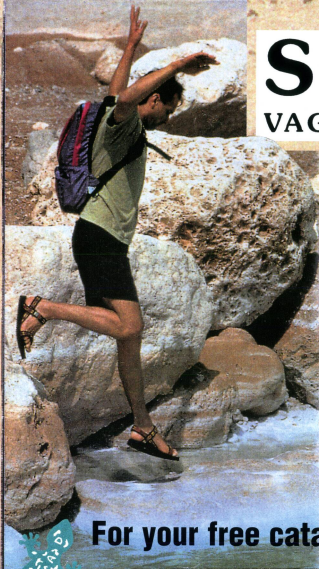
Equipment Survey

	Weight, grams	Dimensions, l x w x t, centimetres	Rolled size, centimetres	Comfort	Conditions for which suitable			Value for money	Comments	Approx. price, \$
					Mild	Cold	Snow			
Self-inflating, open-cell foam										
Adventure Designs Australia (Earthmat)										
Lightweight	610 890	122 x 51 x 2.5 183 x 51 x 2.5	26 x 13.5 54 x 12	●●●	●●●●	●●1/2	●●	●●●●	All Earthmats are made of Stayfast, Adventure Designs's non-slip cloth and come with spare valve cap, repair kit and stuff sack	75 95
Standard	1195	185 x 55 x 3.5	56 x 17	●●●●	●●●●	●●●●	●●●●	●●●●		110
Artiach Spain (Comfort Mat)										
Light	720 790	160 x 50 x 2 185 x 50 x 2	55 x 8 55 x 9	●●1/2	●●●●	●●	●1/2	●●	Stuff sack provided with all Comfort Mats. Repair kit available for additional cost	85 95
Regular	700 1000	120 x 50 x 3.5 185 x 50 x 3.5	50 x 11 50 x 15	●●●●	●●●●	●●	●●	●●●●		80 100
Caribee Korea/Philippines (Insul-A-Mat)										
Supalite	550 800	122 x 51 x 2.5 183 x 51 x 2.5	29 x 12 29 x 16	●●●	●●●●	●●1/2	●●	●●●●	All Insul-A-Mats are supplied with repair kit and stuff sack	80 90
Lightweight	770 1000	122 x 51 x 3.0 183 x 51 x 3.0	51 x 9 51 x 12	●●●1/2	●●●●	●●1/2	●●	●●●●		80 90
Thermal Plus	1000	183 x 51 x 3.1	51 x 12	●●●1/2	●●●●	●●●●	●●●●	●●	Foam used claimed to have 30 per cent higher thermal insulation	130
Lightweight Camouflage	1240	183 x 51 x 3.8	51 x 12	●●●●	●●●●	●●●●	●●●●	●●		130
Cascade Designs USA (Therm-a-Rest)										
Ultra Lite	500 760	119 x 51 x 2.5 183 x 51 x 2.5	29 x 10 29 x 15	●●●	●●●●	●●1/2	●●	●●1/2	Conventional cloth used	100 130
Staytek Lite	540 850	119 x 51 x 2.5 183 x 51 x 2.5	29 x 10 29 x 15	●●●	●●●●	●●1/2	●●	●●	All Therm-a-Rest mats except Ultra Lite are made of Staytek non-slip fabric and are treated with an anti-fungal agent	115 150
Staytek	710 1134	119 x 51 x 3.8 183 x 51 x 3.8	53 x 10 53 x 13	●●●●	●●●●	●●	●●1/2	●●		115 150
Ultra Lite II	394 584	119 x 51 x 2.5 183 x 51 x 2.5	29 x 8 29 x 11	●●●	●●●●	●●1/2	●●	●1/2	Transversely-cored foam	130 160
LE	680 1134	119 x 51 x 5 183 x 51 x 5	53 x 10 53 x 13	●●●●	●●●●	●●●●	●●●●	●	LE comes with stuff sack and repair kit, plus non-slip fabric and transversely-cored foam. The LE was the most comfortable mat surveyed	190 250
DMH Trendsetter Korea (Camp Mat)										
Maxi Lite	860 1260	122 x 51 x 2.5 183 x 51 x 2.5	51 x 10 51 x 12	●●●	●●●●	●●1/2	●●	●●●	All Camp Mats come with spare valve cap, stuff sack and repair kit	70 90
Metzeler Germany (Thermo-mats)										
Thermo Air Short	550	121 x 51 x 3.5	51 x 11	●●●●	●●●●	●●●	●●1/2	●●	All Metzeler mats include a stuff sack and feature foam-bore technology	110
Thermo Air Light	850	181 x 51 x 3.5	51 x 14	●●●●	●●●●	●●●●	●●●●	●●		150
Thermo Air Non-slip	1250	181 x 51 x 3.5	51 x 15	●●●●	●●●●	●●●●	●●●●	●	Non-slip cloth used	170
Thermo Standard	1050	181 x 51 x 3.5	51 x 14	●●●●	●●●●	●●●●	●●●●	●●		140
Thermo Air with Thermo cushions	900	181 x 51 x 3.5	51 x 14	●●●●	●●●●	●●●●	●●●●	●●	Cushion dimensions, 44 x 35 x 3.5; rolled size, 44 x 7; weight, 250 grams	160

● poor ● average ●● good ●●● excellent l length t thickness w width

● poor ●● average ●●● good ●●●● excellent l length t thickness w width

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time of the year at any altitude at which there is no snow. **Snow conditions** indicate those mats which are most suitable for snow-camping. For self-inflating mats these ratings are based on a normally inflated mat with no extra inflation from you.

Value has been determined on the basis of price, quality of materials and construction and the extras that come with your mat. For example, not all self-inflating mats are supplied with the latest non-slip fabrics (which help to keep you on your mat); repair kits, stuff sacks and spare valves are

other important items which are not always provided with self-inflating mats. In the end, however, value can only be a subjective assessment. In my judgment the price has been uppermost, but others might be happier to overlook the initial sting if they know they are getting the best mat available.

Whether you have bought a mat which is good value depends on whether or not you have selected the highest quality mat in your price range. The prices listed in the tables are the approximate retail prices based on prices in outdoors shops in Melbourne and those supplied by some distributors during February 1996.

Stephen Down

Points to consider

Knowing your own body heat

Your size, weight, whether you are a hot or cold sleeper, the quality of your sleeping-bag and what food you have eaten before retiring will determine how good the insulation of your sleeping-mat has to be.

Closed-cell foam mats

Increasing insulation and comfort

Cheaper than buying a self-inflating mat is to carry two closed-cell mats. These will provide a lightweight, warm and comfortable night's sleep, even on snow.

Care

Within reason, closed-cell mats can be treated roughly and still function properly—no need to take special care when rolling them or when attaching them to the outside of your rucksack. You do not have to be as cautious with protecting a closed-cell foam mat as with a self-inflating mat.

Self-inflating foam mats

Increasing insulation and comfort

If you own a 3/4-length mat, use a length of closed-cell foam, about 60 cm long, positioned under your feet for extra comfort and warmth.

Rolling size

Roll out all the air from your mat before you put it in your rucksack. You may need to deflate it a few times to achieve the best result.

Care

These mats are susceptible to punctures, so be careful about this. Once on a trip, punctures are not always easy to repair, and your whole trip could be ruined by night after night of lumpy, chilly sleeps caused by a single misplaced stick or a leaky valve.

How to kill your self-inflating mat (do not try this yourself!)

- Put hot plates, cups or pots on it to damage the fabric, the coating or the bond between the fabric and the foam.
- Spill oils, fuels or various other compounds on it
- Sit on it next to the fire so that the heat over-pressurises it or damages the material.
- Leave it inflated with the valve closed in a place that is bound to get very hot (such as a car or tent on a very hot day). If you don't blow it up you will at least delaminate it.
- Strap it unprotected to the outside of your pack.
- Use it without a groundsheet.

RUCKSACKS

● Packs o' plenty

Numerous packs have emerged from New Zealand's *Rocky Mountain*. All its travel packs and rucksacks are made from abrasive-resistant 1000 denier Cordura fabric, each sporting numerous attachment points, compression-straps and a handy front pocket. Models include a duo of day packs (each 25 litres), 44, 55 and 80–90 litre single- and twin-compartment rucksacks. For the walker-cum-traveller, the *Adventure Pack* (90 litres, RRP \$340) appears to be a satisfactory compromise between the above-mentioned packs and the smaller, but versatile *Travel Pack* (RRP \$320). Other items include a tote bag, bum-bags, and neck wallet. Manufactured by *Flight Group*. Look for them in outdoors shops.

Tatonka's newest travel pack is the *Tough Tour*. Notable features include two side pockets (one converts into a bum-bag), a detachable day pack with mesh pockets, and beefy padding on the hip-belt. *Tatonka's* V1 adjustable harness system is intended to allow for quick adjustment for a variety of back lengths. Two sizes are available. RRP \$328–\$348. Distributed by *Outdoor Survival*.

CLOTHING AND FOOTWEAR

● A plethora of warm wear

New Zealand manufacturer *Wet Industries* has recently introduced *thermal wear* made from *Thermastat* (a material that uses a hollow-core fibre for warmth and wicks moisture from your skin) to the Australian market. These garments include long- and short-sleeved shirts, polo-neck shirts and long johns, and they are available in a medium-weight or heavy-weight material.

Similarly, *Fortrel EcoSpun* is a new polyester fabric made by US manufacturer *Wellman*. Processed from 100 per cent post-consumer, recycled material—plastic beverage bottles—it is used to produce a variety of outdoors wear which, we are assured, ensures high comfort and quality, easy care and durability.

Cigana Sportswear, too, has taken such an opportunity. In addition to 32 per cent

washable wool, 60 per cent Fortrel EcoSpun is blended with 8 per cent polyester to produce the luxurious concoction known as *Eco Wool*. *Cigana* claims that the result is a high-performance, no-pill garment that doesn't itch and has great durability. Indeed, the *Cigana* (half-length zip) *Eco Wool pullover* we inspected looked very good. RRP \$189.

Wigwam Eco-Outdoor has also made several cosy-looking products which utilise EcoSpun. As part of a larger range, the *Walkabout* sock (RRP \$15.95 for a pair) is made of 50 per cent Fortrel EcoSpun, with added polyester, wool and Spandex. Also available is the *Earthwatch beanie* (RRP \$14.50) which is 50 per cent EcoSpun blended with 50 per cent wool and lined with a soft, acrylic headband to wick away moisture. Both are distributed by *Outdoor Agencies*.

Still feeling a little cool? Slap one of *Swanndri's* tops on for size. Three warm tops are now available in *Flexiwool*. This is a new 100 per cent wool stretch fabric able, it is claimed, to withstand four-way stretch and regain its original shape without bagging or sagging. The *Wanaha Vest* (full-length zip), *Tongariro Sweater* (half-length press-stud opening) and *Rahaia Jacket* (full-length zip) (RRP \$102, \$125, \$199, respectively) are made by New Zealand manufacturer *Alliance Textiles*. Available in selected *Snowgum* shops.

● Spinning yarns

The *Wool 'n' Yarn Co* has developed a pure wool polo shirt made from 23 micron wool (a medium weight). The shirt is claimed to be prickly free, will not pill as do some garments made of wool or fleece, is machine-washable and highly breathable—making it suitable to be worn in any season. RRP \$85.

● Walk this way

Among *Merrell's* multitude of sleek and stylish boots are the *Appalachian Waterproof* (RRP \$210) and the *Rimrock GTX* (RRP \$250). While both models appear sturdy in design the *Rimrock* features a Gore-Tex inner and a higher ankle; the *Appalachian* has a one-piece leather upper. An air-cushion mid-sole in both boots should ensure that you bounce up that next spur. Both boots are distributed by *Hilanti Sports*.

Also passing over the editorial desk recently was information on two of the latest boots from Italian manufacturer *Zamberlan*. The *Lady Lite Nubuck* (RRP \$279) and the *Ibex* (RRP \$299) are similar in appearance and both feature an upper material of leather. However, the *Ibex* has a higher rand, which may help to keep your foot drier in damp conditions. Both boots are widely available from specialist outdoors shops.

MISCELLANEOUS

● Let there be light...lots of it

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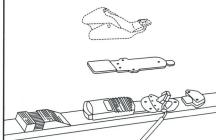
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POTENTIAL

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have your eyeballs blasted by two new torches, the *Hi-Gain 250* and *500*, made by US manufacturer *Diamond Light Industries*. Claimed to capture more of the available light for a brighter, more penetrating beam than torches twice their size, both the *Hi-Gain 250* and *500* feature hands-free use and a handle enabling 360 degree rotation. Actually more like a lamp, the *Hi-Gain 250* would probably be more suitable for

be good for car- or base camping. RRP \$29.95 and \$59.95, respectively, the torches are distributed by *Outdoor Survival*.

Something a little smaller, *Mason Trading* distributes two new headlamps: the small and all-round *Silva 363-1* (100 grams without batteries) and the *Silva 465* (200 grams). The 363-1 features an elasticised head-strap and a variable spot and wide beam, accommodating four AA cell batteries. RRP \$65. With a plastic-mould headset which will perhaps make it feel a

little different on your head, the 465 will illuminate the darkest nooks and crannies with two halogen bulbs and a wide beam. The sting? Its RRP is \$228.

Princeton Tec has a range of cosmic-looking, specialist, waterproof torches, including the *Sport Flash* (it flashes) and *Aqua Strobe* models. Distributed by *Rucsa Supplies*.

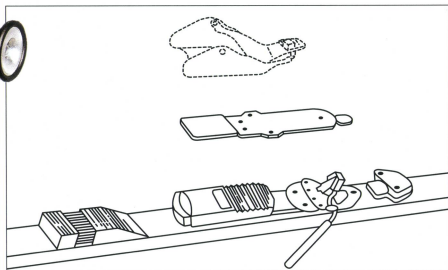
● Brighten my day

Many outdoors enthusiasts will be familiar



Above, flash! *Silva* halogen headlamp. Right, Rottefella TRP 100 release ski binding.

overnight walking trips (weight 212 grams including the battery which lasts for 6 hours) than its heavier companion (821 grams, 15 hours) though the latter would



TRIX

Doing the 'Wayatt Step' Coping with 'climber's knees', by Geoff Wayatt

One of my numerous physical impediments is what I term 'climber's knees'. After long spells of pack carrying and downhill descents one knee aches and occasionally stiffens. No doubt I ran down too many peaks and moguled ski runs in my youth, straining ligaments, grinding cartilage and joints. If you relax my leg muscles and manipulate the knee-joints they feel unstable.

My specific ailments are relatively minor. At 50 years of age, I've climbed Mt Aspiring 35 times and spent over 100 days climbing and tramping in recent summers. My condition, like that of many I talk with, is handy for insisting on an extra rest stop. 'Just a quick breather, it's the shrapnel in my leg acting up again!' (It's also amazing how those nagging aches and pains can be turned into a convenient weather barometer for predicting unseen storms.) A timely retreat blamed on weather or indigestion can be a gracious way of saying, 'My body is falling apart'.

Back to my knees! I suspect that I've completely torn my anterior cruciate ligament (that's the one that connects the front of the tibia to the back of the femur) through hyperextension of the knee-joint. I was skiing a steep slope in deep, heavy snow on stiff slalom skis carrying a heavy pack. As my tips dived I leaned back and turned, overloading and tearing the anterior cruciate of my outside turning knee.

The condition and cause of unstable knees vary widely between people often requiring specific personal care, medical diagnosis and physiotherapy treatment.

However, I have devised and tested a self-help manoeuvre to increase the strength of my knee and improve its stability under load. Practise it on your stairs at home or at the office or better still while bushwalking and descending steep tracks.

By tensing the muscles and tendons around the knee (primarily the quadricep muscle as the leg extends) before the foot strikes the ground, the knee-joint is stabilised to receive the load. My medical sources say that the knee is 20 times stronger when supported by contracted muscles. The action also reduces shock to the ligaments as the structures come under tension.

The 'Wayatt Step' technique is as follows: Firmly tense the quad muscle as you extend the leg into a step. The knee-joint should be held in tension as weight is transferred to the foot striking the ground. The knee-joint is now stabilised to receive your full body weight. The action is repeated for each subsequent step.

The exercise also promotes more controlled and secure foot placements. It's a functional, pro-active routine that requires concentrated practice. It can be used when moving quickly downhill. Once mastered, the 'Wayatt Step' improves confidence when crossing rough ground and gives a distinct feeling of stronger and more stable knees.

Wild welcomes readers' contributions to this section; payment is at our standard rate. Send them to the address at the end of this department.

with the candle lantern, that common and trendy item seen dangling inside many a tent. If you own and use one, you won't want to be without these two gismos. The first is the *Cocoon*, a padded protective device which attaches to your candle lantern to help prevent damage to the structure and/or glass of the lantern. RRP \$15.95. The other is the *Pac-Flat lantern reflector*. This two-piece item attaches to the top of a candle lantern and reflects light downward—extremely handy if you're trying to read a book or a map. RRP \$15.95. You won't be regarded as a 'real' bushwalker unless you've got these items. They are distributed by *Outdoor Agencies*.

● What a view

Roddy Mackenzie's spectacular photos of the Himalayas, shot from the summit of Mt Everest, have captured people's attention and imagination—and not just for the location. Using a *Widelux camera* enabled Mackenzie to photograph the vastness of the scene with an ultra-wide 140° field of view. The *Widelux F8* weighs just 900 grams and features a *Lux F2.8 26* millimetre fixed-focus lens, with shutter speeds of $1/15$, $1/125$ and $1/250$ seconds; it exposes any type of 35 millimetre colour or black-and-white film producing a 24 x 59 millimetre negative. When combined with a tripod, the high-quality inbuilt spirit-level ensures a correct positioning of the camera to protect the fields of view. Available now in Australia from many camera shops, the *Widelux F8* retails at \$3300.

Matt Darby

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Tank capacity: 0.12 litres
Burning time: 1 hour 15 minutes

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Weight: 0.6 kilograms
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Tank capacity: 0.13 litres
Burning time: 50 minutes



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Innovative, efficient, simple to use and very safe. Burns methylated spirits; cooks in two-thirds of the time taken by its nearest competitors. Integrated windshield, two pots (1.9 and 2.1 litres), frying-pan and handle included.
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● Telemark release binding

The Rottefella Telemark TRP 100 is the first new release binding for Telemark skiers in at least five years. It is also the first to be tested to ISO/TÜV standards. Some features of the TRP 100 are: • standard release setting markings, • integrated ski brakes, • all moving parts are metal, ensuring reliability, • antifriction device under the boot heel, • little effect on ski flex, • lifts the boot/binding 12.5 millimetres, improving edging ability, • effective plastic mounting jigs, good instructions, • uses standard Tele-Norm mounting holes and centres, • compatible with most 75 millimetre Telemark bindings, including all Rottefella, Voile and Black Diamond bindings, • weighs only 420 grams.

The release is claimed to be smooth and fast, operating on a precision steel cam and ball-bearing-mounted roller. The plate can be re-inserted quite easily while still on the boot, or by hand if preferred.

The TRP 100 seems to be the state-of-the-art for a Telemark release binding. RRP \$330. Distributed by Merit Apparel.

Peter Mach

● Double vision

German manufacturer Steiner produces a wide range of binoculars. Their prices range from around \$320 to well over \$1000. One of the lightest is the Rocky 8x24 Anthrazit. With a magnification of eight, and weighing only 250 grams, it seems to be extremely easy to use and is ideally suited to the rucksack sports as it occupies minimal space in a pack (110 x 100 x 35 millimetres). It sells for around RRP \$640.

Canon, well-known producer of cameras and photocopies (among other things), now also has a range of binoculars. While not all are compact or light enough to be suited to the rucksack sports some, including the 8x22A model (RRP \$279), are small enough to be packed into a shirt pocket. They are available at some camera shops.

● Simply adaptable

Much has been said about water purification in recent issues of *Wild*. If by chance you own a Pür water filter, you may be interested in these two items. The EasyFill Bottle Adaptor will enable you to connect your water-bottle to your water purifier, making it easier to use. It sells for RRP \$11.95. Similarly, the StopTop Carbon Cartridge attaches directly to your water-bottle. It is claimed to improve the taste of water by removing chemicals, pesticides and herbicides, and it will treat around 400 litres of water before the carbon cartridge needs replacing. RRP \$34.95. Carbon refills for the StopTop Carbon Cartridge cost RRP \$13.95. ●

Products (on loan to *Wild*) and/or information about them, including colour slides, are welcome for possible review in this department. Written items should be typed, include recommended retail prices and preferably not exceed 200 words. Send them to the Editor, *Wild*, PO Box 415, Prahran, Vic 3181.

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BOOKS

Life in the Burragorang

by Jim Barrett (published by the author, 1995, RRP \$14.95 from outdoors bookshops or direct from the author, 65 Brock Rd, Glenbrook, NSW 2773).

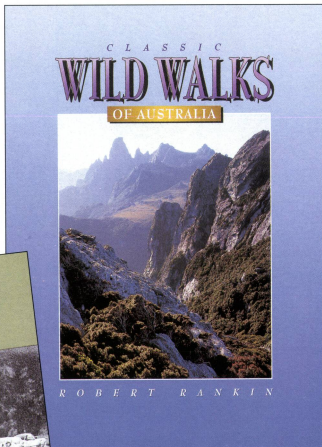
When Jim Barrett writes a book he seems to find enough material to write a few more books. After recent publications on the Coxs and Kowmung Rivers, Kanangra Walls and Yerranderie, he has returned to the scene of his first book *Shack Country* and used leftover and new material to write about one of his favourite areas—the Burragorang valley. It is sad that bushwalkers cannot now experience first hand the grandeur of this valley or the warm friendships that were forged between the original settlers and visiting bushwalkers. Fortunately Barrett has been around long enough to have experienced both. (He was able to walk in the valley before it was flooded by the waters of controversial Warragamba Dam.)

With a well-researched text and excellent photographs, mainly taken in the first two decades of this century, Jim Barrett has produced another interesting book. Warmly recommended.

David Noble

Classic Wild Walks of Australia

by Robert Rankin (Rankin Publishers, third edition 1996, RRP \$44.95).



If ever an Australian wilderness publication deserved to be described as 'classic', it is this one. *Classic Wild Walks* is a success story in any language. This, the third edition of the substantially and beautifully produced tome, includes new and updated material. If you don't have one of the earlier editions, make sure that you grab yourself a copy of this one.

Chris Baxter

Lake Pedder

A World Heritage place to cherish and enjoy. Report on the Management of the Area Proposed for Restoration by Dr Geoff Mosley (Lake Pedder Study Group, 1996, RRP \$10 (includes postage) from Pedder 2000, 130 Davey St, Hobart, Tas 7000).

The former Federal Labor Government lost its way on environmental issues, not least in its weak handling of the issue of draining Lake Pedder.

In this study, Geoff Mosley (see his article on Pedder in *Wild* no 54) examines the management options for an unflooded Pedder and sets out a viable management plan.

The favoured management option would involve closure of the Scotts Peak road near Huon Crossing, with recreation access along walking routes to the north and east of the lake and with the south and west being a wilderness zone.

Let's hope we see it soon.

Brian Walters

Walking the Wilderness Coast

Lakes Entrance to Pambula. A Bushwalking, Canoeing & Holiday Guide

by Peter Cook & Chris Dowd (Wildcoast Publications, second edition 1995, RRP \$16.95).

The track notes from the first edition, covering the coastline from Cape Conran in Victoria to Eden in New South Wales, have been expanded westwards to Lakes Entrance and northwards to Pambula. But the only addition of any substance is a

separately described two- or three-day walk along the beach from Lake Tyers to Marlo, near the mouth of the Snowy River. The new information on Lake Tyers Forest Park and the northern section of Ben Boyd National Park is too brief to be of much value. The strength of the book still lies in the original extended walk notes of up to 18 days' duration. There is little point in buying the second edition if you already own the first. But if you don't, and you

LIFE IN THE BURRAGORANG

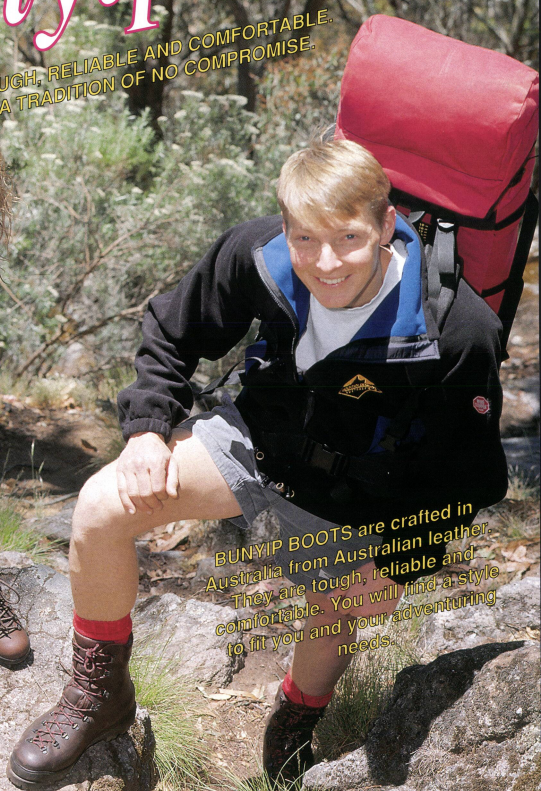
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Grant Da Costa

● **Moir's Guide South**

Guidebook to the Tracks and Routes of the Great Southern Lakes and Fiords of New Zealand

edited by Robin McNeill (Great Southern Lakes Press, 1995, RRP \$NZ24.95).

This is the sixth edition of the 'classic' Moir's guidebook (at least for the southern section). The previous edition was published in 1979 and given the unstable nature of mountains in New Zealand was certainly due for some revision. According to the title page this edition has been 'completely revised' but much of the text is in fact little different from that in the previous edition. The new material that has been added is certainly valuable and most walkers who like walking in New Zealand will want to buy this update for its inclusion even if they have the previous editions.

The areas covered include the Routeburn, Caples and Greenstone valleys, the Hollyford, the Milford Track, the mountains west of Te Anau including the Kepler Track and the mountains of southern Fiordland near Dusky Sound. Some new areas include the mountains and valleys east of Te Anau—some truly magnificent country that has been largely ignored by overseas visitors. All in all, a useful addition to the library of those who like walking in New Zealand.

DN

● **Tramping in the South Island**

Nelson Lakes to Arthur's Pass

by Sven Brabyn (Brabyn Publishing, 1995, RRP \$NZ22.95 from 11a Suva St, Christchurch, New Zealand).

Last year I reviewed an earlier volume by Sven Brabyn and co-authored by Elise Bryant, *Tramping in the Southern Alps—Arthur's Pass to Mt Cook*. This new volume continues in the same format and covers the area immediately to the north. It has

much to offer the Australian bushwalker who seeks out new walking areas. It would seem that most of the South Island (and much of the North Island) is a paradise for bushwalking. Certainly the entire region described in this volume is first-class bushwalking country. It covers the Arthurs and Lewis Pass areas, the Kaikoura Ranges, the Paparoa Ranges and Nelson Lakes as well as lesser-known places.

The format adopted by the author seems very sensible. A day-walk or a 12-day walk is covered in about the same amount of space—the theory being that only experienced trampers will go on the longer trips and hence need much less detailed descriptions.

Last summer, and the summer before that, I was in parties that completed long traverses of some of the country covered in the guide and was therefore able to gauge its accuracy. The tramping times seem consistent although part of the information about the number of bunks in some of the huts was wrong. I also found that one pass description was inconsistent between two different walks that both used this route. However, these were only small faults that don't detract from this guide's usefulness.

DN

COMPUTER SOFTWARE

● **Australian Wild Scenes**

Australia's Rainforests Screen Saver by Robert Rankin (Rankin Publishers, 1996, RRP \$29.95).

● **Australian Wild Scenes**

Australia's Wilderness Screen Saver by Robert Rankin (Rankin Publishers, 1996, RRP \$29.95).

● **Classic Wild Walks of Australia**

A Guide to the Bushwalks by Robert Rankin (Rankin Publishers, 1996, RRP \$49.95).

● **Wilderness of Australia Daily Diary and Information Manager**

by Robert Rankin (Rankin Publishers, 1996, RRP \$29.95).

There's no stopping Robert Rankin. His stream of wilderness publications has become a flood: calendars galore, diaries, cards, books, CDs, and now three different types of computer software.

Classic Wild Walks is the software version of the well-known book of much the same name. (See the review of the third edition of the book above.) There are, however, a number of differences, including additional text and many different pictures. This version is supplied on three-and-a-half-inch disks but we are informed that a CD-ROM version, including a video, will be available within a year. Will inexpensive upgrades be available? Certainly, we are assured.

Cyber-junkies, stand by for lift-off into the Australian wilderness! ●

CB

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Attached Harness Guide



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AHS harness system
Elasticised lid
Dual ice-axe loops
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Sleeping-mat straps
Double-layer base
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Unzipable internal divider
Attached Harness Guide

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Detachable shoulder-strap with padded
Attached Harness Guide



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Attached harness guide

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- AHS harness
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- Gusseted for expandable volume
- Side and base compression-straps
- Top, bottom and side lash-tabs for attaching extra equipment
- Adjustable internal divider
- Under-lid map pocket
- Roomy top-lid pocket



Attached harness guide

DELUXE RUCK SACK

5327

50 litres
62 cm x 35 cm x 20 cm

- Top loading with separate access to sleeping-bag compartment
- Padded-harness back with anatomically shaped shoulder-pads and padded hip-belt

- Roomy top-lid pocket
- Easy-access side pockets
- Expandable base
- Front Velcro map pocket
- Stretch-cord front for extra equipment
- Ice-axe loop and lash-tab
- Draw-cord storm throat



STANDARD RUCK SACK

5325

40 litres
54 cm x 34 cm x 20 cm

- Top loading with draw-cord storm throat
- Padded-harness back with anatomically shaped shoulder-pads and padded hip-belt
- Roomy top-lid pocket
- Easy-access side pockets
- Stretch-cord front for extra equipment



DAY PACK

5324

30 litres
45 cm x 35 cm x 15 cm

- Organiser front pocket
- Top handle
- Side Velcro pockets
- Front-opening main compartment
- Padded-harness back with anatomically shaped shoulder-pads and padded hip-belt



FOLDAWAY BACK PACK

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25 litres
Open: 45 cm x 28 cm x 15 cm
Closed: 17 cm x 28 cm x 15 cm

- Expandable compartment has shoulder-pads and is easily packed away inside lower compartment
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- Padded hip-belt



EXPANDABLE BUM BAG

5326

30 cm x 24 cm x 11 cm

- Expandable base
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GEAR TOTE

5335

60 cm x 30 cm x 30 cm

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lubbing in

A call to arms



George Quinn's article on bushwalking clubs (*Wild* no 60) is welcome and informative, but deserves comment. Firstly, a correction: the name of the NSW bushwalking organisation has, since 1990, been The Confederation of Bushwalking Clubs NSW Incorporated. Formed in 1932, the organisation represents almost 60 clubs, with memberships totalling over seven thousand.

The list of advantages of joining a bushwalking club deserves some important additions. One is that members of most clubs are covered by public liability insurance, which is of special relevance to walk leaders. Many clubs also offer accident insurance—this could be of substantial benefit if major injury is sustained or helicopter rescue required. In New South Wales, the Confederation provides these insurances at very low cost, and negotiations are proceeding with brokers and interstate federations with a view to a possible national policy.

In New South Wales, people in Confederation clubs have access to training courses in first aid and emergency procedures, and the opportunity to participate in the oldest search and rescue organisation in the State—formed in 1936. They also receive a free quarterly magazine. In addition, the Confederation is active—and will no doubt have to be increasingly so—in its endeavours to stave off the day when all walk leaders, even unpaid ones, will need formal accreditation.

While this Confederation is not opposed to commercial operators in the wild, the novice adventurer should consider whether there is more to be gained by joining a club, with its ongoing opportunities for training and socialising, than by forking out lots of money for a one-off experience.

Most importantly, for those walkers who value the wild environment (and continuing reasonable access to it) there is another reason for joining a club. The off-road vehicle, power-boating, horse-riding and gun lobbies have become extremely vocal and effective in their opposition to wilderness and their demands for non-passive access to wild areas. More than ever before, bushwalkers and other passive users must be heard. Most responsible clubs and their State bodies are active in this regard. In New South Wales, the Confederation has

recently nominated the Grose wilderness area and supported many others, and has successfully won legal access to most of Sydney Water's catchments. The list of challenges is virtually endless.

Join a club—we need your support.

Andy Macquene
President

The Confederation of
Bushwalking Clubs NSW Incorporated
Enquiries: GPO Box 2090, Sydney 2001

● All at sea

I'd like to add my two bobs' worth to the debate over carrying GPS and mobile phones in the bush. While not really a bushwalker, I'm an avid reader of *Wild* and an experienced and active cruising sailor.

The boating fraternity underwent this same soul-searching exercise when GPS became available to us at a reasonable price in about 1990–91. Now, five years later, it is considered almost irresponsible to be without one. Not only that, but a fair percentage of newer sailors are relying on them without the backup of 'manual' navigation skills. We also have the ridiculous situation of boats in semi-enclosed waters such as bays being navigated from way point to way point by GPS interfaced to autopilots. This, in a situation where the next point of reference is within sight. True, the GPS is a marvellous tool for offshore and even coastal navigation, allowing us to be lazy and relaxed, and more accurate at the same time. Sure beats using a sextant and tables.

As on the water, I foresee the situation of GPS-dependent bushwalkers without map-reading skills becoming 'lost' when the GPS malfunctions. We've had instances of mariners yelling for assistance by mobile phone, but as phone calls cannot be 'tracked' in the same way as marine radio calls it doesn't help much if they don't know where they are!

So to those who feel the need for such 'aids', I say take a lead from the boats: carry a spare GPS for when the primary one breaks, spare batteries for it and for the phone, and a means of charging them all. Maybe you'll need a four-wheel drive to carry it all! (Not to mention the services of *techno-junkie* to manage it all! Editor)

Petrea Heathwood
Manly, Qld

● Mass assault

I can see some fundamental errors in the blueprint for walker management described in *Wild* no 59. Due to government initiative and extensive advertising, Tasmania has experienced a boom in the tourist industry. The money raised by this growth industry has led to major management problems. The main problem I see is that too many people are being encouraged to visit 'wilderness' areas such as the Lake St Clair–Cradle Mountain area of Tasmania. The ability of the environment to recover here is slow due to the highly friable and nutrient-poor soils, the short growing season and the cold conditions that prevail for many months. Environmental degradation is magnified by many inexperienced and environmentally ignorant walkers trampling on vegetation... Directly and indirectly, the marauding masses have made this area far from a wilderness experience.

But why do we need to open a 'wilderness' experience to the masses? Sure, bushwalking can't become elitist, but as soon as you compromise the environmental sustainability of an area the focus must shift from making wilderness available to preserving what little wilderness we have. Tasmania has vast areas of natural beauty in many locations. Why not redirect the tourist traffic into more sustainable yet just as beautiful areas, which offer the novice the same experience? By managing the problem at the root level rather than simply applying fix-it measures it will make much of the South-west more manageable. People who really want to experience the beauty of the South-west will come back, but not the masses. We need to realise that Tasmania's wilderness is a finite resource and as such has to be managed to strict guidelines. The blueprint for walker management is a step in the right direction but a lot more needs to be done to protect this resource from becoming just a fond memory.

Hamish Morgan
Malvern, Vic

● Booking the bush

I wish to add myuppence worth to the ongoing discussion about interpretive nature writing. Quentin Chester's article 'Bringing the Bush to Book' (*The Wild Life*,

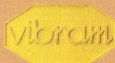
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Wild no 56) was excellent and long overdue. It got the ball rolling. I do, however, take exception to his observation that there is little quality nature writing by Australians. Ross Brownscombe and Martin Beveridge (*Wildfire*, *Wild* nos 58 and 60, respectively) assert that this is mainly the fault of *Wild*. I disagree, for similar reasons to those outlined by Stephen Bunton (*Wildfire*, *Wild* no 60), that is, I think it's more a function of what people submit than of editorial policy.

I am of the opinion that *Wild* has done more for this genre than any other outdoors magazine...

Wild has shown faith in reclusive writers like Trevor Lewis, who has been submitting work since *Wild*'s inception. His work is in-depth, honest, sometimes interpretive and gradually getting more personal. He is not a photographer, but *Wild* usually adds relevant photos by others.

Quentin Chester lauds the work of Barry Lopez, Peter Matthiessen and other North American writers and considers Australian writers such as EJ Banfield, John Blay and Warren Bonython notable exceptions. Having scoured my book shelves I find that to these exceptions can be added a small avalanche of past and present classics. So much so, that we would appear to have a rich tradition of our own.

Back in the 1860s HW Wheelwright wrote *Bush Wanderings of a Naturalist* (reprinted by Oxford University Press in 1979) and George Bennett produced *Gatherings of a Naturalist in Australasia* (reprinted by Currawong Press in 1982). Both show a surprisingly sympathetic understanding of the Australian bush and the unique animals in it, and are still readable 130 years later.

Closer to my patch, and to our time, is Elyne Mitchell's *Australia's Alps*, published in 1942.... It is still the most evocative celebration of seeing and being in the High Country.... If Elyne's approach was romantic, Francis Ratcliffe's was down to earth and pragmatic. His often-reprinted classic *Flying Fox and Drifting Sand* first appeared in England in 1938, and in Australia ten years later. In the early 1960s Douglas Stewart penned *The Seven Rivers*. Although mainly about fishing it has some nice passages about the texture, colour and look of the landscapes he passes through...

Stewart was also a poet of note, and it is our poetry that perhaps contains some of the best, if cryptic, nature writing. It is, sad to say, almost never published in outdoors magazines...

[Regarding] writing associated with conservation campaigns, outstanding contributions have come from Dick Johnson in his *The Alps at the Crossroads* and the many people who put together *The South West Book—a Tasmanian Wilderness*.... These books are full of the combative pleas for conservation lauded by Quentin Chester...

The above titles only come from my limited collection; I am sure there are many more. So, one might well ask some questions of Chester and Brownscombe: What

have you been reading all these years? Why this education vacuum? Why this fascination with American writers and neglect of Australians? Is this cultural cringe?...

Klaus Hueneke
Palmerston, ACT

I'm grateful to Klaus Hueneke for drawing attention to several Australian writers whose work I neglected to mention. If the net is cast wider still there are the likes of Les Murray, Oodgeroo Noonuccal, Tim Winton and Roger Macdonald. But my particular interest was in walking-boots-and-all narratives that explore the kind of bush encounters familiar to Wild's following. It may be true that we as readers have not recognised all the prophets in our own midst, but it still seems to me that much of the continent remains 'unwritten'. Quentin Chester

● Lock doubt

The multiplicity of padlocks on the gate to the Mt William Carapook Isci (*Wild* no 59, page 43) is not a result of 'Bureaucratic overkill' as suggested—indeed, quite the reverse. The 14 padlocks allow individual access to the summit by various groups of technicians, each holding a separate key.

Bill Purcell
Longlea, Vic

● Gone Wild

The magazine (*Wild* no 60) looks great. Your role as a mainstream, authoritative voice for conservation is invaluable. Your stand on the Mt McCall Track advertisements is admirable; it's an example for all.

Rob Blakers
South Hobart, Tas

Hi! I am a 16-year-old student currently living in Perth. I am a keen bushwalker and rockclimber and a great fan of your wonderful magazines, *Rock* and *Wild*. Not only do they provide great reading and valuable information, but they are also inspirational and motivational tools for me to get out into the wild and experience what cannot be described by words.

My life ambition is to become a mountaineer, and that is the reason I am writing this letter. My trouble is that...I have no idea of how to get started or where to start on the path to becoming a successful and independent mountaineer.

Well, Tim Macartney-Snape is a man whom I genuinely admire and look up to, and I'm aware that he is one of your contributors... If Tim or any other knowledgeable staff could provide me with basic starting points and guidelines on how to break into the mountaineering circle, I would be most grateful...

Mark Hewitt
Shelley, WA

Mark Hewitt's letter has been forwarded to Tim Macartney-Snape for reply. Editor

Readers' letters are welcome (with sender's full name and address for verification). A selection will be published in this column. Letters of less than 200 words are more likely to be printed. Write to the Editor, *Wild*, PO Box 415, Prahran, Vic 3181.

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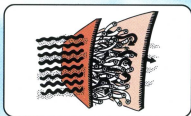
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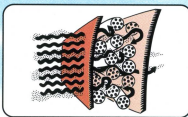
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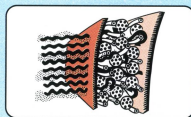
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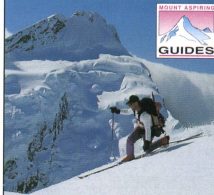
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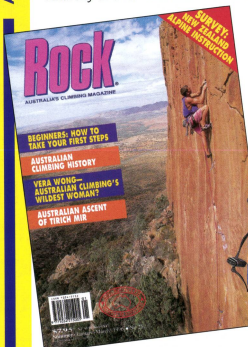
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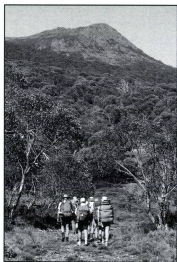
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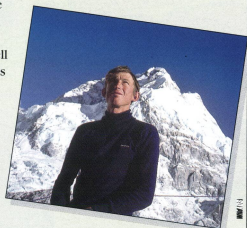
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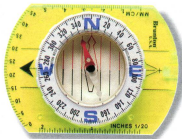
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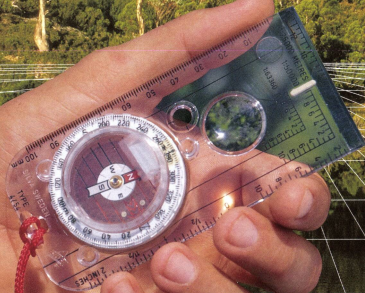
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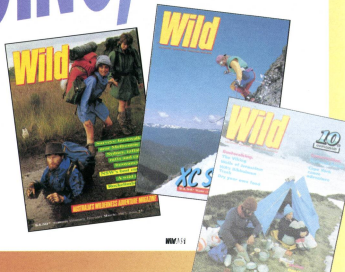
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Peter Campbell plunges
from the summit of
Mt Bogong, Victoria.
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